Women from Traditional Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia

Negotiating Public Spaces

Eka Srimulyani

Amsterdam University Press

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Cover illustration: Women studied *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic text books) in a religious congregation (photographed by Eka Srimulyani).

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 7

Glossary and Abbreviations 11

Table of Figures 13

1 **Introduction: Why Study Women and *Pesantren*?** 15
Brief Background 15
[Muslim] Women in Indonesia 19
Gender and Javanese Values 22
Why Women and *Pesantren*? 25
Women's Issues in Education 31
Brief Description of the Research 32
Book Chapters 34

2 **Women and *Pesantren* Education: History, Kinship, and Contents** 37
Women and Education in Indonesia 37
Tracing Women's Paths in *Pesantrens* 40
Nyai of *Pesantren*: 'Santri ibuism'? 47
Do *Pesantrens* Preserve Patriarchal Values? 54
Pesantren and Their Affiliated [Women's] Organisations 55
Nahdlatul Ulama and Its Women's Wing Organisation 56
P3M and 'New' Islamic Organisations 60

3 **Women and *Pesantrens* in Jombang: A Portrait from the Fieldwork** 63
A Glimpse of Jombang District 63
Diwek Sub-district 65
Pesantren Tebuireng and Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary 69
Pesantrens for Girls in Jombang 73
Pesantren Seblak: Womens' Educational Leadership 75
Pesantren Seblak (1921-1988) 75
Pesantren Seblak (1988-2003) 78

4 Nyais of Jombang *Pesantrens*: Public Roles and Agency 87
Biographical Sketch of the *Nyais* 87
Nyai Khoiriyah 87
Nyai Abidah (Bu Abidah) 95
Nyai Mahshunah (Bu Sun) 100
Theorising the Public Activities of the *Nyais* 103
Between Public and Private Lives 107
Supporting the Agency of *Pesantren* Women: Examining Kiai's Roles 108
The Notion of Honour and Modesty 111

5 Santriwati's Life: Religious Femininity in *Pesantren* Education 115
Girls and *Pesantren* Education 115
The *Pesantren*: Moral Values and Differentiated Gender Treatment 118
Kitab Kuning: On Gender Relations 121
Uqûd al-Lujjayn in the *Pesantren* 123
Santriwati and Their Personal Stories 128
Nyai and Female Pupils of *Pesantren*: Power and Authority 132

Conclusion 135

Notes 137

Bibliography 159

Index 175

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Glossary and Abbreviations

Aisyiyah	women's wing organization of Muhammadiyah
asrama	dormitory
aurat	the common definition of *aurat*, understood by the vast majority of Muslims, is to cover all of the body except the hands and the face; some *ulama*s say it also includes the feet
bahsul masail	a discussion on religious matters attended by *kiai* or *ulama* to produce a religious legal interpretation and a recommendation from the Islamic perspective on particular issues
bapak	Indonesian word for father
baraka	a bounty of grace
Dayah	traditional Islamic school in Aceh
Depag	Departemen Agama (Department of Religious Affairs)
Depdikbud	Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Department of Education and Culture)
Diknas	Departemen Pendidikan Nasional (Department of National Education)
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (National House of Representatives)
DPRD	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (Regional House of Representatives)
Fatayat NU	young women's section of Nahdlatul Ulama
Golkar	Golongan Karya (functional group [political party])
Gus	a title for the son or the male relatives of *kiai*
halaqah	learning circle of a group of students that resembles a class
ibu	Indonesian word for mother or married woman
IIQ	Institut Ilmu al-Quran (Institute for Advanced Quranic Studies)
Kiai	a [male] religious leader; a leader of a *pesantren*
kitab kuning	Islamic classical textbook
kota santri	the town of *pesantren* student
madrasah	Islamic school

mahram	the group of people who are unlawful for a woman to marry due to marital or blood relationships
masjid	mosque
MPD	Majelis Pendidikan Daerah (Regional Educational Board)
muballighah	female religious preacher
Muslimat NU	women's wing organization of Nahdlatul Ulama
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama (the biggest traditionalist Muslim organisation)
P3M	Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat (The Centre for *Pesantren* and Community Development)
perempuan	woman
Pesantren	commonly known as Islamic boarding as well as 'traditional' Islamic educational institutions
Pesantren Putra	Pesantren for boys
Pesantren Putri	Pesantren for girls
PGA	Pendidikan Guru Agama (religious teacher training college)
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party)
pondok	building or dormitory for student accommodation
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembanguna (United Development Party)
priyayi	traditional Javanese middle class
purdah/burqa	the veil that also covers the face
putri	female, girl or daughter
RMI	Râbitha Ma'âhid al-Islamiyyah (The association of Islamic *Pesantren*s)
santri	*pesantren* [male] pupils
santriwati	*pesantren* female pupils
sekolah	school
Surau	Islamic traditional educational institution in West Sumatra
Tarawih	the evening prayers in fasting month/Ramadan
tariqa	sufistic group
TPQ	*Taman Pendidikan Al-Quran* (basic school for learning the Quran)
ulama	religious leader/scholar
Umi	a wife of [male] *dayah* leader or female religious leader
*ustazah*s	female teachers
yayasan	a foundation

Table of Figures

Figure 3.1	Map of Jombang	64
Figure 3.2	Map of *pesantrens* location in Diwek	66
Figure 3.3	The tree of Kiai Hasyim As'Ary's family	72
Figure 3.4	The tree of kinship in the leadership of Pesantren Seblak	79
Figure 3.5	Map of *Pesantren* Salafiah al-Machfudz	81
Figure 4.1	Categorisation of the *nyai*'s public roles	104
Figure 4.2	Layers of *nyais*' activities	106

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1 Introduction

Why Study Women and *Pesantren*?

Brief Background

In 2003 when I decided to focus my research on women and *pesantren* by examining the agency of the *nyai* (the *kiai*'s wife or daughter) in a *pesantren*, the first question I encountered from one of my colleagues was '*Apa mereka memang berperan*' (Do they have any role)? This question came as no surprise to me, as the majority of the best-known references and published works on *pesantren* in Indonesia barely lift the tip of the veil on the lives of women in *pesantren*. The main focus of *pesantren* research has almost always been on the role and leadership of *kiai*, either in the *pesantren* or in connection with their affiliation to such religious organisations as the *Nahdlatul Ulama* and the like. In his book, *Pesantren, Sekolah and Madrasah*, Karel Steenbrink states that "the wives of *kiai*s never achieved significant roles".[1] Nevertheless, data from the 1930s reveal that a female leader of a *pesantren* in Jombang, Nyai Khoiriyah, was a learned *ulama* who was influential both in the *pesantren* leadership and the wider community. She and her [first] husband established a *pesantren*, and she was actively involved in its leadership. In Indonesia, the term *nyai* itself is also commonly known from literary works as the term used to designate the concubines or "housekeepers" of Dutch officers or ordinary Dutchmen in the history of colonial East Indies. Well-known examples are Nyai Dasima in the book by G.F. Francis or Nyai Ontosoroh in *Bumi Manusia*, a novel written by the famous Indonesian novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer. In Java in general, beyond the colonial sphere, *nyai* was a term of respect for an older woman, and in some areas in Java, legends live on of a powerful woman/goddess/leader of the world of the invisible spirits, called Nyai Roro Kidul, who possessed enormous mystical powers. Nowadays, *nyai* also carries connotations of respect for a woman, particularly in a *santri* community, as it indicates that she is an immediate member of a *kiai*. Regardless of her educational and family background, once she is married to a *kiai*, she is a *nyai* in the eyes of her *santri* or local community.

Before discussing *nyai* and their roles as well as their agency in more depth, a brief explanation of what a *pesantren* is and how its values and

traditions have affected the lives of women is called for. For the majority of Indonesian people, a *pesantren* is simply understood as a boarding school which carries on the tradition of teaching about Islamic heritage through textbooks known as *kitab kuning*, written in either Arabic or Malay or a local language in Arabic script.[2] The term *santri* is believed to be derived from an Indian word, '*sastri*', meaning holy. Although the idea of an unbroken link is tempting, the connection between *pesantren* and early Hindu-Buddhist influence is being questioned as current research has suggested a more radical rupture between present-day *pesantren* and the earlier Hindu-Buddhist tradition. In his book *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat*, Van Bruinessen has argued that the concept of *pesantren* is a local Indonesian tradition. Having said that in his work, he has also pointed out how the Middle East, particularly Mecca during the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, influenced the tradition of Islamic learning in the Archipelago, including *pesantren*.[3] Unlike Mahmud Yunus, who believed that *pesantren* have been present ever since the penetration of Islam in the Archipelago,[4] Van Bruinessen says that an institution today known as a *pesantren* was non-existent before the eighteenth century.[5] In his chapter on the Politics and Cultures of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia, Hefner also indicates that the dissemination of the Islamic schooling process in the Archipelago began during the eighteenth century and that prior to that time Islamic learning was "not least of all of a sufistic and folk-ritualistic sort".[6]

An institution called *pesantren* is in fact far more than an educational institution, or school, where the pupil just comes, boards and learns, it is also a specific 'sub-culture'[7] of the Indonesian Muslim community, more particularly the Javanese Muslim community. A *pesantren* has its own social hierarchy, 'culture', leadership structure, idiosyncratic rules and principles that might differ from those in the surrounding community, and these include matters related to women's lives. Informants in the field, and even some researchers on *pesantren* themselves, used to describe a *pesantren* as a 'little kingdom' because of its relative autonomy to 'organise' its own community. The social hierarchies in *pesantrens* in Java reveal the undeniable influence of the Javanese social structure, but modified by Islamic tradition. The *kiai* and his family form a 'higher' or 'upper' class among their *pesantren* fellows, some of whom might also come from families with a relatively high socio-economic status. In the case of the *kiai* and his family, this status is augmented by religious power and authority, a statement which applies equally to learned and active *nyais*.

Within a *pesantren* sub-culture, women are required to respect some specific norms and rules. What is commonly considered 'acceptable' for women outside *pesantren* might not be 'acceptable' for *pesantren* women. One example that springs to mind is that in most [traditional]

pesantren, women are not allowed to wear trousers, which nowadays are daily wear for women in big towns and villages, particularly among the younger generation in Indonesia. Social interactions between men and women in a *pesantren* are also restricted. The spatial segregation between men and women is strictly upheld in the majority of *pesantren*, although the Indonesian Muslim community in general does not insist on this kind of segregation. *Pesantren*, seeking their legitimation in some references in *kitab kuning*, also teach a specific concept of 'gender' relations between men and women or husband and wives, a code which female pupils especially are expected to espouse, emphasising the devotion and loyalty expected of a woman. Although the general curriculum of education in Indonesia also contains allusions to this kind of ideal womanhood, the *pesantren* goes into far more detail about the principles involved, and this teaching is part of the religious instruction, and will effectively imbue it with a different meaning for the pupils. In view of these realities, *pesantren* women deserve to be studied as a separate group, as the main portrait of Muslim women in Indonesia will not represent their real life, leadership and agency adequately. Certainly, the context of their social lives, the barriers they face and the traditions ascribed to them socially and religiously as '*pesantren* women' are relatively different from the lives of other women in the society. The borders of the public and private domain in their lives are also idiosyncratic. All this needs to be elaborated on specifically in order to acquire a better knowledge of their agency, and how they 'negotiate' their agency within the ascribed values and peculiar social context with which they are confronted as *pesantren* women.

In the study of *pesantren*, the five elements of Dhofier, or '*unsur-unsur pondok pesantren*',[8] namely *kiai*, *pondok*, mosque, *santri* (*pesantren* pupil) and the study of *kitab kuning* are almost without exception the main points of reference used by researchers as starting points to examine the *pesantren* institution. Literally, *kiai* is a title for an *ulama*.[9] In Central and East Java, all *ulama* who own and manage a *pesantren* are addressed as *kiai*. A *kiai* has been described as a charismatic religious figure in traditional Muslim communities in Java. In this specific context, the term '*pondok*' means the living accommodation for pupils, rather than the *pesantren* institution overall. As mentioned above, providing dormitories for pupils who board is a typical characteristic of a *pesantren* tradition. The *pondoks* usually have minimal but reasonable facilities,[10] an introduction to the hard life the pupils might have to contend with in their future lives.[11] All pupils have to use similar facilities in the *pondok*, regardless of their family background or social status. This is to reduce the social gap between the disparate groups, and is among the values *pesantrens* have been proud to have introduced.[12] Since *pesantrens* insist on segregated education, the *pondok*s for male

and female pupils are separate. The mosque is the place for the five daily communal prayers, the observance of which is also an inherent part of *pesantren* values. One of the main duties of a *pesantren* leader is to lead the communal prayers in the mosque, a responsibility he can also delegate to someone he trusts.[13] For the female pupils, it is a *nyai* (*kiai*'s wife) who leads the five communal prayers in a separate place, known as a *musholla* (small mosque/prayer house). The teaching of classical Islamic textbooks, the *kitab kuning,*[14] is one of the principal educational activities in a [traditional] *pesantren*, although some *pesantrens* have adopted *pelajaran umum* (the general/secular sciences) into the curriculum. *Santri* is the term used to designate *pesantren* pupils, although in *The Religion of Java*, Geertz uses the term in a more general sense to describe a devout Muslim group.[15]

In 1926 the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), a 'traditionalist' Muslim organisation, was founded in Surabaya.[16] It was established to counter the encroachment of the modernising influence of 'modernist' organisations such as the Muhammadiyah[17] on the local religious traditions of Muslim communities in rural Java. The leading figures in NU at the time were Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary, Kiai Wahab Chasbullah and Kiai Bisri Syansury.[18] The group that established the NU organisation was a network of leading *kiai*s or *pesantren* leaders.[19] The establishment of NU was a significant starting point of the involvement of the *pesantren* and its community in the wider political affairs of the nation, including the nationalist movement. In 1946, NU established a women's organisation, whose members come from *kiai*s' families or from a *pesantren* background.

In the Sukarno era, known as the *Orde Lama* (Old Order) period, Abdul Wahid Hasyim, son of the charismatic *pesantren* and NU leader Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary, was appointed the Minister of Religious Affairs.[20] Even before his appointment, Wahid Hasyim had already initiated a range of reforms in his *pesantren* of origin in Tebuireng.[21] As minister, he continued his efforts by contributing to various attempts to reform the *pesantren* educational system. Among his initiatives was the establishment of training schools for female teachers, including the Sekolah Muallimat or Pendidikan Guru Agama (Training College for Female Religious Teachers). Some Sekolah Muallimat affiliated to the NU organisations, among them the Pendidikan Guru Agama NU Putri (NU Female Religious Teacher Training College) in Jombang, were also founded under his ministry. The establishment of female teacher training colleges was a response to the demand for female teachers in the educational institutions for girls established in the 1930s and 1940s.

Under the New Order regime during the presidency of Suharto, the *pesantren* concentrated on its role as an educational institution, as all political activities were kept under the strict control of the central

government. As a consequence, compared to the previous period of the Sukarno era when NU was a major political party in Indonesia the *pesantren* and *kiai* were not overtly involved in the larger political deals in the country. The government assumed the responsibility for the social legislature in family court matters – previously the preserve of the *kiai* and *pesantren*. The government also established the *Kantor Urusan Agama* (Office of Religious Affairs) in rural areas to deal with marital issues, divorce, and inheritance – matters previously settled by *pesantren* leaders or local *ulamas*. Obviously, the role of the *pesantren* was substantially reduced because of the existence of this government agency to handle socio-religious matters. In spite of having their sails trimmed, *pesantrens* and *pesantren* leaders were still considered authoritative and thought to be able to influence the local people.[22]

[Muslim] Women in Indonesia

A superficial analysis might give the impression that Muslim women have no power, as "the authority lies ultimately and by divine ordination in the hands of men".[23] Haddad states that various anthropological accounts of Muslim societies describe Muslim women's lives as backward, basing this argument on women's subordination in the household. [24] This is a rather sweeping statement, and further research is certainly needed to understand the real complexities of Muslim women's lives in specific historical and political contexts. For instance, to some extent the practice of segregation between the sexes in certain Muslim countries, most notably in the Middle East, has also been understood as an example of gender-based polarization. Some writers believe that the physical and symbolic segregation of the sexes automatically means that there is a separate space for men and women, and that women's physical mobility is consequently limited to the household.[25]

Criticism of the relevance of the dichotomy between the public and private in the study of divergent societies has also been put forward by scholars and anthropologists. Among them is Cynthia Nelson, who has written her assessment in a seminal essay on "Public and Private Politics: Women in the Middle Eastern World", on the basis of her anthropological research in Egyptian society in particular and Middle Eastern society in general. She recommends rethinking notions of 'power' as an embodied quality institutionalised in types of social structures and recognizing it as a particular type of social relation instead, as reciprocity of influence. Instead of Middle Eastern men always assuming power over women, as earlier male-biased ethnographies seemed to imply, Nelson argues in favour of the concept of a 'negotiated order', an on-going dialectical process of social life in which both men and

women are involved in a reciprocity of influence vis-à-vis each other. Drawing on ethnographic literature from throughout the Middle East, Nelson has shown that women can and do exercise a greater degree of power in various spheres of social life – for example, through the structural linking of kin and religious and supernatural control – than has previously been appreciated. [26] Nelson's call to study the domains of women's power in the Middle East has struck a resonant chord with feminist ethnographers. Since the mid-1970s, anthropologists and other ethnographically minded social scientists have documented the many ways in which women assume power in an otherwise patriarchal milieu, by influencing the lives and decision-making of significant others, including their menfolk. As noted by ethnographers, the household is probably the primary site of power for most Middle Eastern women,[27] but it is by no means the only site in which power and influence are exerted. The Iranian scholar Kandiyoti has promoted the notion of the 'patriarchal bargain' in "new areas of struggle and renegotiation of the relations between genders".[28] Writing in the same vein, Nayereh Tohidi has challenged the assumption that women are powerless and repressed. She has chosen instead to recognise the spirit of empowerment and resistance among Iranian women, arguing that women can "renegotiate gender roles and codes and [...] find a path of compromise and creative synthesis".[29]

In the Indonesian context, this statement is particularly true of the wives (and sometimes daughters) of male *pesantren* leaders, who enjoy considerable power and prestige as religious figures in their own right.[30] Likewise, Evers Rosander has recorded female religious participation in a sufistic group in male-dominated society in Senegal. Focusing on several pious women in the group, she has argued that these women were "able to partly overcome their ideological, culturally constructed 'handicap' in religious life and in the society at large".[31] The involvement of Muslim women in the public religious field has also been recorded by Coloun, in research into women's involvement in the Mouride *tariqa* in Senegal. Focusing on Sokhnas Magot Diop, who inherited the leadership of the *tariqa* from her father, Coloun has argued that she also inherited the power and influence conferred by *barakah* from him.[32] *Barakah* is literally understood as the 'bounty of grace'. It connotes the power, wisdom and charisma of true leadership that connects her to her followers. Sokhnas had considerable political power in the region in which she lived, because of her disciples' loyalty and her many influential connections.[33] Fernea has recorded the activities of female religious leaders among Iranian women.[34] Commenting on such situations, Smith argues women not only "have a form of power in the domestic sphere", but, in their religious practices, they are also "able to exercise degrees of power that extend into the male domain".[35]

I have also observed some kinds of power extension among *pesantren* women, which generate more space for them to enter the male domain, as will be described in the next following chapters.

Afsaruddin has used the term 'female public space' to underscore the notion the split between the public and the private or domestic but has failed to describe the complexity of women's lives in diverse circumstances.[36] Although this division might be used as a starting point from which to review women's socio-political and economic realities, it should be re-evaluated to reflect the changes in women's lives.[37] It is important to recognise that "Islam [...] is not monolithic in its impact on women's lives".[38] It would be truer to say that it exerts differential effects on women in different contexts, and shapes different patterns of female participation in the public sphere, including the public religious space, from which from Muslim women are usually disassociated, as religious leadership has been understood as a male-dominated space.

Many scholarly accounts of the lives of Indonesian women, past and present, confirm the fluidity of the public/private dichotomy in the practical lives of Indonesian Muslim women.[39] Smith has claimed that Indonesian women enjoy more freedom in the public sector than their female counterparts in Middle Eastern societies: "In Indonesia, [women are] generally more liberal than [in the] Islamic countries of the Middle East", and their "work is not isolated or separated from men's".[40] Indonesian women are habitually engaged in the productive sector and other income-generating employment. It is not unusual for Indonesian women involved in economic and productive activities to contribute to the income of their families.[41] In his writings on Indonesian women, Daniel S. Lev, a well-known Indonesianist, remarks that the mainstream Islam in Indonesia does not confine women to their homes, nor does it "deny them substantial gains already made".[42] As Blackburn argues, Islam in Indonesia hardly interferes in the public roles of women.[43] Indonesian religious leaders promote a view in which the possibility of women working has never been understood as contradictory to Islamic values. Quraish Shihab, a well-known Indonesian *ulama* and former Minister of Religious Affairs, has argued that "a woman has a right to work, as far as she needs the work, and as long as religious values and morality are preserved".[44] Another influential Indonesian *ulama*, Alie Yafie, has asserted that "if women have been able to become state presidents, the kind of trivial matter, like working outside the household to pursue a career, should be fine".[45] Indonesian women are also involved in a variety of organisations and movements. Income-generating work is considered acceptable and even desirable for women, as long as it does not interfere with their family duties.[46] Anthropological studies of various ethnic groups in the Indonesian Archipelago also generally suggest that women have played significant roles in traditional lives and

economic production in different social contexts.[47] Jayawardena states that there is a common understanding in Acehnese society that women engage in managing the household and participate in traditional local ceremonies, but this does not preclude the fact that Acehnese agricultural communities in some regions can be polarised into a division in which women's work is '*mita breuh*' (seeking rice, or contributing rice for family meals), while men's work is defined as '*mita peung*' (seeking money to support the family through trading or other economic activities). Both *mita brueh* and *mita peung* carry strong connotations of economically productive work.[48] Accounts from other parts of Indonesia, whether traditionally matrilineal, as in West Sumatra or Java, concur in reporting that women are hardly ever excluded from public spaces or economic activities. Javanese society uses the term '*mbok bakul*' for the lower-class women involved in traditional economic activities. Unquestionably, the diversity of gender relations and practices throughout the Archipelago was largely erased by the hegemonic discourse of gender relations promoted by the State. This occurred most notably under the New Order government, which promoted the relegation of women to the domestic sphere as part of the discourse of State development, despite the opposite reality of many women's lives.

Gender and Javanese Values

My discussion of Javanese ideals of gender relations is based on two major considerations. The first is that Javanese ideals of womanhood were an important source of influence on the gender policies of the Indonesian New Order regime, in which attempts were made to homogenise the diversity of gender-related values and practices in the Archipelago.[49] These policies have had a profound effect on Indonesian gender relations, and in many respects still continue to exist in the post-New Order period. The second consideration is related to the impact of traditional Javanese culture on the understanding of gender relations in *pesantrens*. The *pesantren* culture can be seen as a 'sub-culture'[50] of Javanese society. *Pesantren*s incorporate many values derived from Javanese tradition, including the understanding of power[51] or *barakah*,[52] but the factor of overriding importance in affecting the practice of gender relations in the *pesantren* context has been the Javanese concept of social hierarchy.

As Hull has asserted, "different economic classes generally imply very important differences in the position of women".[53] Traditional Javanese society has three main classes: *ninggrat* (the aristocracy), *priyayi* (the middle class) and *wong cilik* (the lower class). The *ninggrat* are the descendants of the Javanese kings, and the *priyayi* group consists primarily of the government bureaucracy, including the

descendants of regional authorities and those who had access to the colonial schooling system. The *wong cilik* class is made up mostly of farmers, fishermen and small traders. Dzuhayatin has described how this categorization works in terms of gender practices:

> Among the three layers of Javanese society discussed above, the *priyayi* or bureaucratic middle class had the greatest access to strategic positions in the period of national awakening prior to independence. Their greater access to Western education, in particular, enabled them to play a prominent role in political movements. The appointment of Sukarno to the presidency of the new nation in turn allowed the Javanese *priyayi* tradition to become the dominant culture of state, influencing everything from bureaucratic policies to family affairs. In this manner, the *priyayi* ideals of women as dedicated housewives became the ideal type for Indonesian women as a whole. [54]

In her work on the performing arts, Hatley has sought to explain the Javanese ideals of womanhood. Although the traditional ideals derive from the gendered practices of the Javanese royal courts (*kraton*), undoubtedly the modern ideals are influenced by the Western-style education, to which women from the privileged classes have had access. A new stream of ideological influence has entered Indonesian society in recent years – associated with current notions of modernity, progress, and globalisation.[55] In the past, many of the members of early women's organisations were from the *priyayi* class, those with the opportunity to have a formal education.[56]

Studies of Javanese women commonly advance one or the other of two mutually contradictory arguments. The first argument is that Javanese women, especially those belonging to the lower social classes, have achieved a significant social status in the family, as they have participated in income-generating activities.[57] The second argument is that Javanese women are subordinated in the Javanese hierarchical system, as they accrue no power or prestige from their economic activities outside the household.[58]

Even though the tenor of their argument is that the public/private dichotomy is essentially contingent, most studies of Javanese women point out that Javanese ideals associate women with domestic lives and a lack of power and prestige. After her discussion of the fluidity of the public/private division in Javanese social life, concludes that Javanese ideals see women as "neither equal nor dominant".[59] These ideals are assumed to have been derived from the traditional understanding of womanhood prevalent at Javanese royal courts.[60] Hence, even when the flexibility of the public/private division in Javanese women's lives is

acknowledged, Javanese women are seen as inferior, although they might have achieved a high-ranking position.[61] The traditional notions of womanhood cultivated at the royal courts are seen as constituting a cultural ideal in Java: "Women are ascribed characteristics judged as essentially inferior to those of men and are thus assigned subordinate status".[62]

The anthropological work on the Javanese has also confirmed the training of young Javanese girls for domestic life, as a preparation for marriage. In her study of kinship in an area in Central Java, Geertz records that girls were given serious responsibilities around the home from very early adolescence.[63] Sullivan notices that some scholars disregard the division of labour as a means to sustain a power monopoly. In the minds of these scholars, the segregation of labour is a way to organize society ordained by 'nature'. In the opposite court are those scholars who focus on Javanese women's engagement in the public realm and are in no doubt that women have access to participation in the public sphere outside the household.[64] The trading sector in villages in Java is largely dominated by women, a statement just as true of lower- as it is of middle-class people. Privileged middle-class women who have had access to education can also hold positions in the schooling system, civil service and other public institutions.[65] It would appear that placing an emphasis on domestic life in community as in Java does not necessarily result in the exclusion of women from the public realm.

In any attempt to understand the intersections of class and gender, an examination of the understanding of power in Javanese society is essential. Anderson has argued that the Javanese concept of power differs from the Western model. He adduces four main differences between the Western concept of power and its Javanese counterpart. In the Western tradition, power is abstract and morally ambiguous, its sources are heterogeneous and its accumulation has no inherent limits. In contrast, in Javanese culture power is concrete and homogeneous, it does not raise the question of legitimacy, and the amount of power in the universe is constant.[66] Anderson's study has been criticized by Nieuwenhuis,[67] who castigates its neglect of the forms of power available to Javanese women. *Priyayi* values can be traced back to the "marriage of Javanese aristocratic values with nineteenth century codes of proper conduct of indigenous servants of the colonial Javanese tradition".[68] The broader influence of *priyayi* values in Javanese society has often been noted. This elite influence did not stop with the end of colonial rule, but has continued into the present period through a process that has been referred to as *priyayization*, whereby *priyayi* norms and values are adopted by other elements of the population. In the process of *priyayization*, class status gives the elite woman access to power in the Western sense.[69]

The status of Javanese women tends to be tied to that of their husbands, "since all individuals in Java must be ranked differentially relative to each other, husbands and wives are so ranked, and husbands enjoy higher status than their wives".[70] Yet this also means that women are permitted a range of styles for being 'inferior', and this accounts for the somewhat "paradoxical nature of women's position in Javanese society".[71] A woman's control over the household and her agricultural or trading activities outside the home do not provide her with a standing in the community, as this is "determined by the occupation and personal reputation of her husband, or in his absence, a grown son, who represents her as head of the household at public gatherings and ritual occasions. A woman is dependent on a man for full social representation".[72]

The processes of *priyayization* and *ibuism*, in which a woman derives power from her husband's status, also occurs in Javanese religious communities, including *santri* groups. Naturally, it also affects the position of women married to religious leaders. A *kiai*'s wife, the *nyai*, is respected both in the *pesantren* community and in society as a whole,[73] regardless of her understanding of or intellectual capacity in the Islamic sciences. Undeniably, some *nyais* are also able to combine this legitimacy based on kinship, which gives them ascribed power, with their own agency based on their personal talents and skills.

Why Women and *Pesantren*?

Publications written in English about Indonesian women are still few and far between compared to those about the other Muslim world of the Middle East[74] or the Indian Subcontinent.[75] In the three volumes of *Women and Islam: Critical Concepts in Sociology* edited by Haideh Moghissi,[76] there was not a single article on Muslim women in Indonesia. Likewise, with very few exceptions, volumes on women in Indonesia have no chapters on Islam.[77] My point is that the social life of women with a *pesantren* background is not socially identical to the life of Indonesian [Muslim] women generally, considering that the micro-social world of the *pesantren* underpins specific cultures and principles related to women and women's issues. Koentjaraninggrat,[78] an anthropologist who devoted his major work to Java, did understand that the social stratification of the Javanese *santri* community needed to be studied in greater depth as it differed from the social stratification of Javanese society in general. What makes an institution like a *pesantren* pivotal in a study devoted to the lives of Muslim women? Most importantly, it is a core of Islamic values reproduction, including notions related to women and gender issues in general. *Pesantrens* and their

leaders also connect the community to some contextual issues in the nation. During fieldwork, I certainly came across some *pesantrens* that hosted a workshop on counter-terrorism or organised discussions about women trafficking or domestic violence. Hardly less important is the fact that linked by their widespread, extensive networks, *pesantren* share deeply held values of Islamic traditions maintained from one generation to another.

A number of works have been devoted to the study of *pesantrens* and other traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. These works have examined their traditions, leadership, intellectual transmission, their organisation by the Nahdlatul Ulama and other related topics. Having read these numerous pieces of research and studied published works on *pesantren*, I feel it does indeed seem plausible to conclude that women have attracted less attention. In all the studies on *pesantrens, kiais* are almost always the core subject. Until 2002, the time I conducted fieldwork on women and *pesantren*, there had been very few academic works either in English or Indonesian that specifically dealt with the topic of women and *pesantren*, particularly any to do with the leadership and the agency of *pesantren* women.[79]Anyone reading *pesantren* history and its development in Indonesia must immediately be struck by the absence of women as 'actors',[80] not only as leading *pesantren* personalities and teachers but also as pupils. This is not only true of the study on the earlier history of *pesantrens*; the same can be said of the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century research on *pesantren*.[81] The absent portrayal of female actors can be linked to the patriarchal nature of *pesantren* leadership[82] so clearly spelled out in different studies on *pesantren*; for instance, male descendants of a *kiai* rather than the *kiai*'s female family will be prioritised in deciding the succession to a *pesantren* leadership. This disparity is also found in other such traditional educational institutions in different parts of Indonesia, such as Aceh. Even in the general study of Islamic education in the Muslim world, the existence of women, particularly in traditional educational settings, is still generally 'missing'.[83]

It was in the juxtaposition of such a strongly patriarchal tradition and the dynamic generated by the current social changes in Indonesia that the idea of examining the life and agency of women in an Islamic educational institution took root. This book will focus specifically on *pesantren* women in Java. Compared to other Islamic traditional educational institutions in the other parts of Indonesia, Java has a strong *pesantren* tradition, extensive networks[84] and, more particularly, this tradition is closely related to one of the biggest Muslim [traditionalist] organisations, the Nahdlatul Ulama. Interestingly, although the *pesantrens* show no signs of flagging, some other similar types of institution like the

surau in Minangkabau seem to be in a decline as a consequence of the boom in the modern schooling system in West Sumatra.

What I mean by *pesantren* women in this study are those women who are engaged in the educational setting of a *pesantren* institution; either as leaders, teachers or pupils, more particularly those who live in a *pesantren* compound, so that the *pesantren* rules or traditions also affect them in more intensive ways. My chief aim will be to examine their engagement in *pesantren* education throughout the history of the institution, and to observe the sociological aspects of those women's lives, agency, leadership and political roles. In writing this book, my main argument is that despite some obvious patriarchal traditions attached to the *pesantren* or similar institutions, or the elements of what has been called misogyny inherent in the textbooks of curriculum taught in the *pesantren*, various *pesantren* women have refused to be daunted and have explored their potential and transformed this into an agency whose effect is felt not just in their *pesantren* but also their community. Some chapters of this book will elaborate on some outstanding figures among the *pesantren* women who fit this description. In this study, I examine in detail the female figures or leaders of *pesantrens* in Java who are addressed as *nyai*. As a *nyai*, a woman assumes the top place in the hierarchy among the other women in the *pesantren*. This kind of hierarchy is clearly an adaptation of the Javanese social class system, and to some extent it is also a marriage between Javanese feudalism and Islamic values.

Generally speaking, several categories of women are found in a *pesantren* milieu. The first category consists of *nyais*, who are the closest female family members of a *kiai*.[85] Some *pesantrens* also have the category of *badal nyai*, which is a kind of junior *nyai*. *Ustazah* are the non-*nyai* female teachers. Their task is to instruct the group of female pupils, the *santriwatis* (female pupils) in the *pesantren*. The same layers, although with some slight variations, can also be found in the similar traditional educational institutions like the *dayah* in Aceh. It is my intention to concentrate the discussion on *nyai* as the closest relative to *kiai*s, either their wives or daughters,[86] but I shall also study the other groups of women insofar as they relate to, interact and identify with the *nyais*.

Literally, *nyai* means a married woman.[87] In her study about *muballighah* (women preachers) in Jakarta and West Java, Marcoes divides them into two categories: *ustazah* and *nyai*. In her description, *nyai* designates the status a woman derives from her father or husband. When a woman marries a *kiai*, she will automatically become a *nyai*, regardless of her family background and education. In many aspects, a *nyai* is imbued with a particular '*power*' and hence is legitimated to undertake certain tasks and duties because of her affiliation with a *kiai*'s family.

Her social position contains elements borrowed from the concepts of *priyayization* and *ibuism*.[88] In his discussion of this subject, Nieuwenhuis explained the concept of *ibuism* as a situation in which a woman takes care of family members, group members, members of a certain social strata, a firm/company or a country, without expecting a certain degree of power and prestige as a reward: "Women who are looking after a family, a group, a class, a company or the state without demanding power or prestige in return".[89] A *nyai* can also be seen as a 'mother' for all the pupils. In many cases, a *nyai* certainly wields 'unofficial power' which allows her to act on behalf of the *pesantren* leadership, especially in matters pertaining to female pupils. Regardless of whether her name is officially registered in the *pesantren* management structure, a *nyai* is a 'women leader' in a *pesantren*. This position is imbued with important meaning and is an entry point for the exercise of a wider agency for a *nyai* with adequate qualifications. In my research, I have defined their situation as '*santri ibuism*', which will be covered in great detail in the second chapter.

Endogamous marriage is common in *pesantrens* as it is considered one of the ways to preserve the 'blue blood' of a *kiai*'s family. When the marriage between the children of two *kiai* is solemnized, the relationship between the two *pesantrens* is also reconfirmed, and this opens a possibility for good networking between many different *pesantrens*. A *santri ibuism* role has two sides: on the one hand, a *nyai* will gain respect and derivative power from her male family members' position; on the other hand, a *nyai* also takes responsibility for her role as 'symbolic mother'[90] for the female pupils in the *pesantren*. Even though their status initially derives from their male counterparts, either through marriage or a consanguineal relationship, some *nyais* also develop their own potential and take initiatives that contribute to their meaningful agency.

When a woman becomes a *nyai*, either by inheritance or by marriage, the status comes with duties and expectations from both the *pesantren* and the community. If a *nyai* is capable and willing to work hard, she can fill an important position in the *pesantren* and community leadership. A *nyai* who is competent in Islamic studies will be an instructor for female pupils. Some also assume the role of instructor or speaker in certain forums. Some *nyais* are actively involved and have important positions on the board of Muslimat or Fatayat NU or other civil society organisations. They are also involved in politics, a tendency which emerged very visibly in the Reformation era, when religious organisations like NU and the Muhammadiyah began to affiliate with politics. A number of *nyais* also have the chance to manage or lead the women in a *pesantren*[91] or, in a rare case, a *nyai* can even become the leader of both men and women in the *pesantren*. The role a *nyai* assumes is

varied. When a *kiai* dies, a *nyai* can replace him, although commonly *nyais* will restrict their activities to *pesantren* for girls. If the leadership role is taken over by her son, a *nyai* will become a respected 'person to be consulted' and will have symbolic authority as a *nyai sepuh* (senior *nyai*), sometimes addressed as *mbah nyai (mbah* means grandfather/ mother*)*. Nowadays, the current generation of *nyais* has enjoyed a good formal education.

Some *nyais* whom I observed and interviewed during my fieldwork in 2003, among them Nyai Abidah, Nyai Mahshunah, Nyai Ummu Salma from Jombang, Nyai Lily Nurkholida from Kediri, and Nyai Hasbiyah Hamid from Malang, are female figures from *pesantrens* who exercise a variety of models of leadership and agency. Nyai Abidah was the leader of *Pesantren* Salafiyah Seblak which had male and female pupils. Nyai Mahshunah and her in-laws are the leaders of *Pesantren* Putri Salafiyah Syafiiyah Seblak in a collective leadership system. Nyai Ummu Salma and her husband, Kiai Nasir Abd Fattah, led the largest women's *pesantren*, the *Pesantren* Tambak Beras compound. Like Nyai Abidah, Nyai Lily Nurkholida leads one of the sub-*pesantren* inherited from her parents in Purwoasri Kediri. When her husband passed away, Nyai Lily took over the running of the *pesantren* which also has male pupils. Meanwhile, when I carried out my research, Nyai Hasbiyah Hamid, who was also a member of *Pesantren* Tambak Beras family, was the leader of *Pesantren* al-Islahiyyah in Malang. In her leadership duties, Nyai Hasbiyah was supported by her daughter, who at that time was managing a WCC (Women Crisis Centre) built on the *pesantren* campus, whose use was not restricted to the *pesantren* but intended for the local community as a whole.

Concerning their heritage, they are all from the immediate family of *kyais*. Without exception, they are daughters of a *kiai* and also married a *kiai*. Their personal circumstances strengthened their position as *nyai* in their *pesantrens*. During my research in a number of *pesantren* in East Java, I never met any *pesantren* female figure who had won broader recognition in the community and was also the leader of a *pesantren*, who was not part of a *kiai* family. The most plausible explanation for this state of affairs is that most of today's *pesantrens* are inherited and/or have been developed from *pesantrens* inherited from the *kiai*'s parents or members of their extended family. Only those who are blood relatives can play an important part and have capital in the *pesantren*.

As mentioned earlier, the published sources on the topic of women and *pesantren* tend to focus strongly on the gender bias in the *kitab kuning*.[92] Little attention has been paid to how such a dynamic, evolving process of gender relations actually takes place on a day-to-day basis in the traditional religious context of the *pesantren*. Just as Indonesian

women in general have to contend with the ambiguity of the division of labour of public and private spheres,[93] so too do *pesantren* women. In this unique context and tradition, the dynamic process of gender relations in a *pesantren* setting intersects with a range of aspects and is not confined to class and gender hierarchies, as it applies generally to the Indonesian women's lives, but is nevertheless heavily influenced by the religious values and the hierarchical concepts prevalent in Javanese society. Interestingly, this process takes place within an educational institution in which the social values of *pesantren* are conveyed to the younger generation of *pesantren* [female] pupils.

Over the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first century, the involvement of leading women has not been restricted to one or two particular *pesantrens*, but has been spread over a number of *pesantrens* for young girls. This raises the question of why have figures like these *nyais* been largely undetected or remain largely ignored in writings on *pesantren*? Two obvious explanations immediately present themselves as an answer to the question. The most conspicuous is because *pesantren* education requires segregation between male and female groups, therefore social interactions between the two sexes are also limited. Given this situation, not all ethnographers would have had easy access to women-centred social life, particularly if the ethnographer was male. Therefore, in their case, perhaps the perspectives they utilized were concentrated on the visible public sphere, in which men assumed official power, and this automatically led to the marginalisation of the women's informal sphere: the world of unofficial, private politics.[94] In his book on *Tradisi Pesantren* (*Pesantren* Tradition) based on his research over the course of 1977-1978, Dhofier explicitly mentioned the limitations with which he was faced when he wanted to gain access to the world of women's *pesantren*. This has not changed much as recently a PhD pupil who is conducting an on-going study of *pesantren* women in West Java also confirmed the restrictions with which he had to contend while making observations and doing interviews with *pesantren* women. The second explanation for the lack of writing on women in *pesantren* is that in a patriarchal society, especially when this is combined with the patriarchal nature of the structural leadership of the *pesantren* and the concepts with which *pesantren* education is infused through such instruments as *kitab kuning*,[95] women's roles have been assumed to be associated with the private domain, and this is also extrapolated to the lives of *pesantren* women.

Women's Issues in Education

Pesantrens have also been the subject of criticism on account of the gender bias in the textbooks known as *kitab kuning*,[96] one prime example of which is the *'Uqûd al-Lujjayn*.[97] Some concern has also been raised by the patriarchal elements in the values implanted in a *pesantren* through its curriculum. These are subsequently combined with the patriarchal perspectives which the instructors entertain, and inevitably the colour their explanation of the texts throughout the teaching-learning process. Several organisations working on gender and Islam at the national level, such as Puan Amal Hayati, Rahima and formerly P3M in its *fiqhunnisa'* division, have set up several empowerment programmes, initially through a women's reproductive rights programme. In this context it is impossible to overlook a Nahdlatul Ulama organisation like Fatayat NU that also concentrates on women's empowerment or gender programmes. By dint of their efforts, various women from *pesantren* have been encouraged to become involved in more public activities beyond the confines of their *pesantren*.

Although considerable attention has been paid to the development of the schooling system and women's access to education, the same cannot be said about the discursive construction of gender in the educational system.[98] It appears that although ideas about gender roles might not always prove a stumbling block to educational opportunities for women in Indonesia generally, they do affect the content of education.[99] In the colonial period, the Dutch introduced a certain rigidity into the representations of gender in colonial society. Certainly, they promoted the view that *men's* primary role was to engage in productive activities in the public domain, while women were assigned to domestic roles, raising children and providing comfort for their husbands at home. The recruitment of native people into the bureaucracy by the Dutch colonial government provided a model in which men's careers were privileged over women's work. It was beneficial to the government to free men from household responsibilities, which might hamper their productivity in public affairs. With the help of Christian missionaries, the colonial regime provided schools in which young mothers and girls were prepared to play their future role as housewives.[100] This gender-based division of labour reinforced a legacy that is still present in contemporary Indonesian society. Some current textbooks used in Indonesian schools still promote a division between the public and the private, directing women towards domestic chores and men towards being family patriarchs and breadwinners.[101] Their purpose is to promote the concept of familism adopted by the State.[102] Muthaliin's research on gender bias in Javanese primary schools demonstrates that it

rears its head in different aspects of the educational process as well as in the social system of the school itself.[103]

Another significant aspect which should be mentioned here in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly *pesantren*, is the segregation encouraged between men and women, although not on the scale of that found in the Middle East or some other Muslim countries like Pakistan. The institution of *purdah* is unknown in the Indonesian Muslim community, most Muslim women make a personal choice to wear a headscarf and clothing that decks all parts of the body except the face and hands. To some extent, 'religious reasons' are brought into play to limit women's access to public education because it takes women out of their private world in order to mix with their male counterparts, something which is frowned upon by some Muslim groups.[104] In spite of these inherent hurdles, in Indonesia women´s attendance at Islamic schools or other educational institutions is quite high, even in communities known for their religious devotion like those in Aceh and Padang.[105] Undoubtedly, some circles have also shown considerable resistance to female education, particularly in the early twentieth century when the schools or educational institutions which accommodated women were few in number. One case in point is an early *pesantren* for girls in Java, *Pesantren* Denanyar. As time passed, women's access to education has expanded significantly, the statistics suggest that female attendance at schools across Indonesia, including the religious schools like *pesantren* or *madrasah*, is relatively high.

However, in terms of the content of the teaching or values transferred through education, the schools or educational institutions have tended to embrace the notion of 'public men-private women'. Undeniably, the Muhammadiyah's Sekolah Muallimat, founded in 1917, actively promoted and taught specific female skills required for a well-run domestic life, in which it did not deviate greatly from many Western schools established for women at that time. A particularly strict division between the public and the private can perhaps be detected in the curricula of a *pesantren*. The textbooks used in the *pesantren*, particularly those from the pre-twentieth-century era, were in Arabic, or at least written in Arabic script.[106] The majority of them were written by Middle Eastern *ulama*, and they reflect the socio-historical context of their origins.[107] Some of these textbooks have been criticised for their gender bias.[108]

Brief Description of the Research

My involvement with *pesantren* women in Indonesia is part and parcel of my interest in looking at Islamic education in Indonesian society and

women´s issues in Muslim communities. In the course of my doctoral research, my focus has changed from the idea of looking at *pesantrens* in different regions or sub-districts in the province of East Java to a specific focus on the Jombang area. The background to this 'shifting' of perspective was information I gathered on the late Nyai Khoiriyah of *Pesantren* Seblak. My principal informant was her grand-daughter, Lily Zakiyah Munir. Lily recounted the history of *Pesantren* Seblak, and in doing so stressed the fact that the *pesantren* has had some dominant female figures in its leadership history. She also mentioned the religious competence of her grandmother (Nyai Khoiriyah). The fact that Nyai Khoiriyah had remained in Mecca, the centre of Islamic learning, for almost 20 years would significantly endorse the perception that she was equipped with the highest religious authority in the Islamic sciences. The next person to mention the *'keulamaan'* (*ulama*nisation – the making of a religious leader) of Nyai Khoiriyah was Sinta Nuriyah A.Wahid, the director of the non-government organisation, PUAN Amal Hayati,[109] who was educated in the *pesantren* for girls al-Fatimiyyah Tambak Beras. She is also married to the celebrated *kiai*, Abdurrahman Wahid – who as a former President is among the most prominent figures in *pesantren* and the NU community. From their descriptions, I concluded that Nyai Khoiriyah was a female religious figure who exerted enormous influence in her public (religious) position within the constraints of the *pesantren* tradition. Their stories of Nyai Khoiriyah inspired me to visit the *pesantren*, which is located in an area of Jombang. In the fieldwork area, I began to grow even more aware that it was not only Nyai Khoiriyah who represented active *pesantren* female figures. Other *nyais* from her *pesantren* and beyond also exerted considerable public influence by holding important positions in *pesantren* affairs and beyond. With the common belief in *pesantren* patriarchal values in the leadership and the material in the *kitab kuning*,[110] the existence of a *pesantren* female figure such as she is very interesting in terms of enriching the history of *pesantren* education in Indonesia with the untold stories of some significant *nyais*.

As a woman myself, gaining access to the *pesantrens* for girls and the female figures in a *pesantren* was not very difficult. My previous educational background and my literacy in Arabic also assisted me in the engagement with the Islamic educational system of *pesantren*. This research began in early 2003, when I commenced conducting interviews and making some visits to various *nyais* and some *pesantrens* for girls, mainly in East Java, in January and February 2003. Another part of my research was conducted from the middle of 2003 until the end of the year. Some interviews with key informants were conducted in Jakarta, and in them I sought more information about Lily Zakiyah Munir, Sinta Nuriyah A. Wahid, and Lies Marcoes. Most of the

interviews with the *nyais*, both formal and informal, were conducted in their *pesantren*. A small part of research to collect additional data and information was undertaken in February 2005.

Thanks to the far-flung, extensive network of a *pesantren*, particularly as a consequence of the endogamous marriage between the *kiai* families,[III] the opportunity to engage with various *pesantrens*, even in different areas, is always possible. I remember that once I was with a *nyai* from *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafiiyah Seblak, when she invited us to visit *Pesantren* Darul Ulum, her *pesantren* of origin. On another occasion, I was with a *nyai* from *Pesantren* Paculgowang, observing her activities and her social interaction with her female pupils, and she then invited me to accompany her to *Pesantren* Lirboyo for the graduation ceremony. She has a close familial relationship with *Pesantren* Lirboyo as her mother is its *kiai*, and her brother, the present leader of the *pesantren*, is married to the daughter of *Kiai* Idris Marzuki, the *kiai* of *Pesantren* Lirboyo. As will be explored in more depth in this book, kinship relationships have played a crucial role in *pesantrens* and in the circumstances of the *nyais* I studied. High status and the capacity to assume the responsibility attached to her position were not necessarily sufficient to permit a woman a high level of engagement with the *pesantren* and the community. It is that transcendent, enhanced capacity for action that sets these particular women apart.

While focusing on the female leaders or *nyai* in Java, I also had the opportunity to engage in the life of female *pesantren* pupils, participating in their classes, *sholat jama'ah* (communal prayers), chatting or staying with them in their boarding houses (*asrama*) All of this reminded me of my earlier experiences in Aceh, where I lodged in just such an educational institution. After finishing primary school, I spent three years living in an *asrama* with female counterparts, while I studied Islamic sciences at Islamic secondary schools, a close but not necessarily exactly similar experience. From my engagement with the female pupils, I also learned to observe how much power and authority a *nyai* can exercise over them. The main parts of the book are derived from the fieldwork in Java as part of my doctoral research. In Java, most data were collected in eastern areas such as Jombang, Malang and Kediri, but the main focus was Jombang, which is known among the Indonesian community as 'kota santri', the town of *pesantren* pupils.

Book Chapters

The book is divided into five chapters. Chapter One, the Introduction, contains a brief description of the Islamic educational institution called a *pesantren* and its place in Indonesian Muslim society. In it, I elaborate

on the reason behind the idea of studying women and *pesantren* in Indonesia, particularly in Java. Chapter Two is devoted to women and *pesantren* education and the *pesantren* tradition in general. It begins with a historical spotlight on women and their education in Indonesia focussing on women and *pesantren* education. It sheds light on the women actors in the *pesantren* world, particularly those female religious leaders who are well-known *nyai* in the Javanese community, by analysing the concept of *ibuism*, which I have designated *santri ibuism* to describe the status of *nyais* from *pesantren* background. This chapter also contains a brief examination of the discourse on women or gender in general taught in the textbooks of *pesantren*, the well-known *kitab kuning*. This information is combined with the dynamics of Islamic organisations affiliated to the world of *pesantren* women like the Muslimat NU or the Fatayat NU. Chapter Three is a description derived from my fieldwork. The main fieldwork area of the study was Jombang in the province of East Java and the surrounding area. Jombang was chosen because of its reputation as the *'kota santri'* (the town of *pesantren* pupils) in the Indonesian Muslim community. It is an area with a high concentration of well-known *pesantrens*. This chapter also contains a description of the figure of *Kiai* Hasyim Asy'ary from *Pesantren* Tebuireng, which was the centre of *pesantren* in his own day, since many if not all of the *pesantrens* leaders in the area, including the *nyais* studied in this book, have some connection to *Pesantren* Tebuireng and to the figure of *Kiai* Hasyim Asy'ary. Chapter Four examines the lives of outstanding women from *Pesantren* Seblak, the principal case studies. The women were selected to represent three generations of *pesantren* leadership, beginning from the founder of the *pesantren* down to the third generation contemporary with this research. This offers a sample of how women in the *pesantren* world exercise agencies over history. Their life-histories are analysed from the perspective of how they have negotiated their public roles, leadership and agency within the compass of some *pesantren* traditions. Chapter Five is dedicated to examining the lives of female pupils in *pesantren* compounds as a complement to the previous chapters that focused on the female leaders of *pesantren*. This part elaborates on the models and principles of *pesantren* education for women that differ from the general schooling system. The dynamics among those teenagers who spent their lives in *pesantren* will also be uncovered through the personal stories of some selected pupils. The last part of this chapter looks at their relationship with other women actors, particularly *nyais,* as *pesantren* usually adopt the familism system in which the *nyais* of their female figures are a sort of figurative/surrogate mother, or some of them become the role models for female *pesantren* pupils.

2 Women and *Pesantren* Education

History, Kinship, and Contents

Women and Education in Indonesia

At the beginning of the twentieth century, women's movements began to spread among both nationalist and religious organisations.[1] Around the same time, as a consequence of the Dutch Ethical Policy, schools for girls were introduced, particularly in Java.[2] Although opportunities for women in the Indonesian Archipelago to participate in a modern schooling system date back to the end of the nineteenth century, they increased significantly in the first quarter of the twentieth century. This coincided with the time the Dutch colonial government introduced what was known as the Ethical Policy. Some enlightened people in the Netherlands felt compelled to repay the 'debt of honour' to the East Indies by improving the living conditions of the local people and providing education for the natives. The most significant part of the project was the establishment of schools for native Indonesians[3] and the admission of boys and girls from aristocratic families to Dutch Western-style schools. As a result of the Ethical Policy, a new class of educated people emerged, including women, who were later to spearhead the struggle for national liberation and the betterment of the lot of the native people. Among them were the founders of various other types of schools for natives in different places in Indonesia.

In 1904, Dewi Sartika from West Java, who devoted her life to the advancement of women's education, established a school for women in Bandung. Her school was a major success and prompted the colonial government to establish various other schools for girls in different areas, among them Tasikmalaya in 1913 and Sumedang in 1916, nearly all of them in Java. During this same period, the educational institutions that had previously catered only for male students began to accept some female pupils. After the opening of the Law Faculty in Batavia in 1924, a few Javanese and ethnic Chinese women enrolled almost immediately.[4] Among the most significant schools in this period was the Taman Siswa,[5] established in Yogyakarta in 1922 by a leading Indonesian educationalist, Ki Hajar Dewantara. This school was the first important educational organisation run by Indonesia's nationalists,[6]

and it did admit some female pupils. Ki Hajar Dewantara's wife was quite active in campaigning for female education.[7]

In the spirit of the times, the idea of providing better education for Muslim women in Java was embraced by Islamic organisations such as the Muhammadiyah and NU. Kiai Haji Ahmad Dahlan, the founding father of the Muhammadiyah, taught a few female pupils alongside his male students. Aisyiyah, the women's organisation of the Muhammadiyah, considered the provision of better education for Muslim women one of its priorities. Hence, Aisyiyah and other organisations like it established educational institutions for girls, including midwifery and teacher-training colleges. In 1919, Nyai Nurkhadijah and her husband, Kiai Bisry Syansury, began to organise a small informal learning group for girls in the compound of their *Pesantren* Denanyar in Jombang. These girls were recruited from among her close relatives and families in the neighbourhood. After this informal *halaqah* attracted the attention of the local community and won its approval, the *pesantren putri* (*pesantren* for girls) was formally established in 1930 in the *pesantren* compound.[8]

In West Sumatra, Rahmah al-Yunusiyyah founded an Islamic school for women, the Diniyah Putri, in 1923. Rahmah came from a religious family, and her brother, Zainuddin Labay el-Yunusiyy, was also a celebrated figure in the history of Islamic educational reform in West Sumatra. He was the founder of the Sumatra *Tawalib* school.[9] As a consequence of her considerable efforts to promote education for women, Ramah is sometimes compared to the figure of Kartini in Java, now a national heroine, famous for her struggle for women's emancipation.[10] For its time, the Diniyah Putri school was a modern institution, and included both Islamic and secular sciences in its curriculum. Abdullah shows no hesitation in declaring that Rahmah's efforts in establishing the Diniyah Putri marked a milestone in the history of the women's movement in Indonesia. Rahmah founded her school just when the idea of female education was beginning to take shape, amid the tension generated between Islamic notions of gender and local traditions.[11] She believed that a woman should be able to become a president, minister or writer, or engage in any other profession that suited her capabilities.[12] Because of her efforts and commitment to promoting female education, she was awarded the title of '*syaikha*'[13] by one of the most famous universities in the Muslim world, al-Azhar in Egypt, in 1975.[14] Rasuna Said, another prominent female figure from West Sumatra, was a friend of Rahmah's. She was also involved in the campaign for female education. She taught at Diniyah Putri in the 1930s and was later active as a religious teacher for girls in the Minangkabau region. Because of her severe, uninhibited criticism of Dutch policies, in 1933 she was sentenced to jail in Semarang for nine months by the Dutch colonial

government.[15] Later, Rasuna Said established another school for girls in North Sumatra.[16]

During the 1950s and 1960s, women began to go to school in increasing numbers. They entered various professions and were politically active in- and outside the party system. Despite having to fight every step of the way for influence, they enlisted in the bureaucracy at all levels, established their own organisations, campaigned for change and did not hesitate to take sides publicly on major social and political issues. Educational policies, provisions and infrastructure of the new Indonesian State had to be created in the post-Independence period. This is when the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which coordinate both the secular and religious education systems, were established.[17] Under the New Order regime, the strategy of educational development was counted among the most crucial issues. Under the Inpres (*Instruksi Presiden*, President Instruction) school programme, the New Order government established a significant number of schools, particularly primary schools, throughout the Archipelago. Remote and rural areas were not overlooked by the scope of the programme. These provisions offered women wider opportunities to be educated, removing one of the major objections of some parents who were reluctant to send their female offspring to be educated outside the local community, as they also expected them to help out with household tasks.

The demand for a better education increased, keeping pace with the rapid economic growth. The chief beneficiaries have been girls, who have profited proportionately more than boys from the continuing educational expansion, especially at the primary level, even though a substantial gap still yawns at the secondary level and beyond.[18] To coincide with National Education Day on May 2, 1984, Indonesia launched its Compulsory Education Programme for the entire Archipelago. This required that all children between seven and twelve years of age had to be offered equal opportunities to obtain basic education. Importantly, there was to be no discrimination based on sex, regardless of the level of the educational institution. Technical and vocational schools and training institutes, including those of the armed forces, were opened to women and girls. Curricula and teaching materials were the same for male and female students. At present, Indonesian women are admitted to a wide range of schools, from primary to tertiary level of education, from religious to secular, from skilled education to the regular schooling system.

At present, the growing intervention of the government in educational policies and the booming of the modern schooling system has caused some decline in traditional schooling systems like *surau*.[19] Azra has referred to this process as "*surau kian tarandam*" (the surau has

sunk more deeply).[20] Examining the case of *surau*, he argues that this process of decline can be attributed to the spread of modernisation and secularisation among the Minangkabau community. The effects of these twin processes have ultimately led to the *surau* system being considered irrelevant to the spirit of modernity. In his work, *Ulama dan Madrasah*, which examines the situation in Aceh, Baihaqi also remarked on the tendency among Acehnese people to leave the traditional Islamic education of *dayah* behind when the Islamic 'modern' schools or *madrasah* were introduced into Aceh. Among the wealthier Achnese families, it has been the custom to send their children to study at modern Islamic schools in Minangkabau, Java and even overseas, particularly in Egypt, in pursuit of their religious studies.[21] The modernisation of *dayah* as a consequence of the integration of *pelajaran umum* (non-religious) subjects has encouraged the birth of modern *dayah* such Bustanul Ulum in Langsa in East Aceh. By and large, compared to *dayah* or *surau* particularly, the situation of *pesantrens* has remained more stable in the face of the penetration of the modern schooling system.

Tracing Women's Paths in *Pesantrens*

The origin of the word '*pesantren*' is derived from the word '*santri*' with the prefix '*pe*' and the suffix '*an*'. It simply means a place at which *santri* can learn, or a place for the student to learn the Quran. The word *santri* itself also has the specific meaning of a *pesantren* pupil.[22] Another word used to identify a *pesantren* is '*pondok*',[23] derived from the Arabic word *funduq* which means hotel or lodging place. Formerly, *Pondok*[24] was the term popularly used to describe *pesantren* education in Java and Madura. Indeed, often the phrase that was used was a combination of the two – '*pondok pesantren*'. Some might just say '*pondok*' or just '*pesantren*'. All of those three terms signify the same meaning of a 'traditional'[25] Islamic [boarding] school. In some areas, *pesantren* students might be popularly referred to as '*anak pondok*' (the children of the *pondok)*, and the verb for living in a *pesantren* and being educated there is '*mondok*' (derived from *pondok*). This would suggest that what has been predominantly (and traditionally) understood of a *pesantren* education is as a live-in (boarding) educational system. A strong sense of the boarding school system in the nature of *pesantren* education is obvious in Boland's[26] comment on *pesantren* in his book, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, when he says that a *pesantren* is "a sort of private religious boarding-school, where as far as possible individual education is given".

The earlier history of the *pesantren* tradition has a link to the Islamic Middle Eastern learning tradition.[27] The fact that some early *pesantren*

leaders studied in the Middle East, particularly Mecca, also strengthens any assertion about this kind of interrelationship.[28] Snouck Hurgronje's portrayal of the people from the Archipelago who made a pilgrimage to and then chose to live in Mecca provides more facts about those *pesantren* personages who were *haji* as well as *ulama/kiai*.[29] In his work on *Mecca in the Latter Part of the 19th Century,* Snouck Hurgronje provided an extensive ethnographical record about some of those people from the Indo-Malay Archipelago who made the pilgrimage to Mecca and thereafter chose to live and study there for a longer or shorter period of time.[30] The founding fathers of both the 'traditionalist' organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama, and the 'modernist' organisation, Muhammadiyah, studied in Mecca with one of the famous *ulama* from the Archipelago, Syaikh Ahmad Khatib. The connection between the Mecca as the centre and Southeast Asia as the periphery can be traced back to the seventeenth century and even earlier. [31] The tradition was then perpetuated in such educational institutions as *dayah* or *rangkang* in Aceh, or *surau* in West Sumatra or *pondok* in the Malay Peninsula and the southernmost part of Thailand, Patani.

As an educational institution, the *pesantrens* in Java have commonly been associated with male pupils. In the earliest phase of their history, most predominantly during the eighteenth century,[32] *pesantrens* admitted no female pupils, a situation which continued right up to the beginning of the twentieth century.[33] Although since that time, the female element in the tradition of a *pesantren* has certainly existed in small but significant pockets, the majority of the research on *pesantren* still disregards women. For instance, in his in-depth research into a Javanese community, in which he propounded the variants *santri*, *abangan* and *priyayi*, the famous anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, portrayed a *pesantren* as an educational institution associated with the *santri* variant within Javanese society, as a learning institution for male students only.[34]

> "... at the center of the traditional school system lays[lies] the pondok, also sometimes called pesantren. A pondok consists of a teacher-leader, commonly a pilgrim (hadji), who is called kijaji [kiai], and a group of male pupils, anywhere from three or four to a thousand, called santri."[35]

Geertz's description clearly 'overlooks' the fact that from the beginning of the twentieth century the *pesantren* educational system began to admit female pupils, and this information is almost without exception overlooked in majors studies on *pesantren*.[36]

As a boarding school, the *pesantren* represents a microcosm, governed by particular rules and traditions. In his work on the "Principles of Pesantren Education", Wahid portrays *pesantrens* as "... military

academy or a cloister in the sense that those taking part in it experience an exposure to a totality. Compared to the partial educational environment offered by the present-day Indonesian public school system, which acts in the 'general education structure' of the nation, the *pesantren* is a unique culture in itself".[37]

A *pesantren* does not resemble either a public school or a *madrasah*. Physically it is a compound consisting of various buildings, forming a complex. A Dutch scholar, Karel Steenbrink, has described a *pesantren* as a complex consisting of the *kiai*'s residence, a place for religious observance or *masjid*, one or more dormitories for the students constructed of bamboo or wood, one or more rooms serving as kitchens and one or more rooms for taking baths or performing ablutions.[38] Since the time of Steenbrink's fieldwork several decades ago, the physical structure of many *pesantrens* has undergone significant changes. Today, a *pesantren* is likely to consist of more permanent buildings. One important aspect, however, has remained the same: a [traditional] *pesantren* is always a compound that resembles a small village, enshrining its own community and social structure, and governed by the *kiai* and his family.[39] A big *pesantren* like *Pesantren* Manba'ul Ulum or *Pesantren* Tambak Beras, for instance, has several sub-*pesantrens* under a separate leadership of a member of the *kiai*'s family. Each sub-*pesantren* has its own name, for instance, *Pesantren* Putri Al-Fatimiyah or *Pesantren* Putri al-Lathifiyah, which are run by the great-grandchildren of the founding father, Kiai Wahab Chasbullah. The *pesantren* of Lirboyo, which has more than ten thousand students, is among the biggest *pesantren salaf* (traditional) and famous in East Java and beyond. It also has some sub-*pesantren* complexes. One of the sub-*pesantren* was *Pesantren* ar-Risalah, which was designed in terms of concept and facilities from *Pesantren* Lirboyo by one of the daughters of *Kiai* Anwar's, who used to be known as Ibu Aina. *Pesantren* ar-Risalah is a modern *pesantren* with a compound that can be called 'luxurious' compared with others in the same *pesantren* area. It is governed by its own idiosyncratic rules. For instance, discipline to do with food was introduced. Students are not allowed to receive food from home, all their food is supplied by the *pesantren* and is monosodium glutamate (MSG)-free. The pupils are also supplied with traditional herbal drinks called *jamu*. As the food is supplied, the costs that parents have to pay to have their children educated in this *pesantren* are also much higher. This sub-*pesantren* follows a modern curriculum and focuses on learning three different foreign languages: Arabic, English and Mandarin. In all of these characteristics it deviates from the main *salaf* [traditional] system of p*esantren* Lirboyo.

A *pesantren* education should involve not only teaching and learning activities, but also thorough-going instructions about how to behave as

a good Muslim. Karcher has described the integrated educational system that characterizes the life of a *pesantren*:

> The integration of learning into the context of life in the *pesantren* leads to a broad learning concept which is open to the most varied formal and informal methods of teaching and acquisition. *Santri*[40] learn, together with other *santri*, under *kiai*'s leadership, within the framework of the Muslim five-daily prayer structure. In that he lives in the *pondok*, the *santri* acquires certain behavioral ideals both practical and theoretical, which again reinforce his original motivation to learn. Whether a *santri* is washing at the well, praying in the mosque, reading Quran, working in the cooperative store, building a house, making a speech, listening to a study group or discussing in the dormitory, it is all a component of the learning process.[41]

A *kiai* is a role model for his pupils, and he is also the point of reference for guidance and counselling on matters related to the *pesantren* and the lives of its pupils. Therefore, a *kiai* can be understood as the 'figurative parent' of his pupils.[42] In some *pesantrens*, the *kiai* is even sometimes addressed as *'romo'* (a Javanese word for father). Since it is known that the interaction between the *kiai* and his female students is more limited than the interaction he has with his male students, the question arises who acts as the exemplary figure for the female students? If the *kiai* is the symbolic father, who is the mother? Why is this not obvious in many works on *pesantren*?

A *kiai* and his family are part of the Javanese elite, particularly the *santri* community.[43] Research has revealed that most of them also seem to come from 'well-to do' families or have a middle to upper class socio-economic status. A *kiai* and his family live in the main residence of the *pesantren* called the *dalem*, some of which are big traditional houses inherited from their predecessors, built according to the precepts of colonial-style architecture. Some *kiais* and their family have renovated their main residence and reconstructed it according to more modern architectural ideas, but whatever they do, they never overlook the fact that the buildings must serve to indicate their higher status compared to that of the other villagers. *Pesantren*s in Java are strongly nuanced by a system of social stratification, in which the *kiai* and his family occupy the top level. If a *pesantren* is referred to as a 'little kingdom', as was the wont of some informants, a *kiai* is a 'king', and all his family count as members of a royal family. In my observations in the field in some *salaf pesantrens* in 2003, the manner in which the pupils or *santri*s acknowledged the *kiai* or *nyai* resembled the traditional way people showed their respect to the *sultan* (king) at a Javanese court. As the time

for the break for Ramadan approached, some female pupils in one *pesantren* in Jombang came to ask the *nyai*'s permission to leave the *pesantren*. One by one they came to the *nyai*'s quarters, knelt down and shuffled slowly towards her and kissed her hand before asking her permission. They used *Bahasa Jawa halus* (refined Javanese language) to address her.[44] Although not all of *pesantren* would observe a similar tradition, all of *pesantren* pupils do show their *pesantren* leaders great respect, and this also extends to their *nyai*. This respect is different from that shown by students in regular schools and *madrasah* to their school principals.

The *santri* have been brought up with the idea that paying respect to the *ulama* as well as to their master or someone who teaches them is part of the learning process itself. This kind of respect is characteristic of traditional Islam.[45] The blessing of these *ulama* or teachers is an important factor in deciding whether their study is successful or their life blessed. In the eyes of the pupils and the surrounding community, a *kiai* or *nyai* is someone who can deliver *barakah* (blessing) which is manifested in their evident power. This kind of teaching is commonly found in the *kitab* taught in *pesantren*, particularly in *Ta'lim Muta'allim* written by Al-Zarnuji. Nevertheless, they way they convey their respect in actual daily life of the *pesantren* or *dayah* diverges, a natural consequence of the fact that the local culture is also a determinant in shaping such a social interaction. The *santri* also pay respect to the children of *kiai*. In some [traditional] *pesantren*, pupils, particularly female pupils, assist the *kiai* of his family with household duties, which includes minding the children of the *kiai*, whom they used to address respectfully by the titles 'Gus' and 'Mas' for his son[s] or 'Neng' for his daughter[s]. Even if a *kiai*'s wife plays only a passive role in the *pesantren* and its leadership, she is still the *nyai* of the *pesantren*, the highest ranking woman in the *pesantren* context, and hence also commands respect. If she pursues her own trajectory in the leadership of the *pesantren* and in the public life of community, for instance, on the *majelis taklim* of her village, the respect for her will be even greater.

Whatever the role a *nyai* chose to assume in the past, the privilege of becoming the main leader of the *pesantren* used to be the prerogative of the *kiai*'s son or other male descendants, to the exclusion of his daughter or his wife. Apparently, the problem of succession was arranged systematically: if a *kiai* had no son, than he would marry off his daughter to the most learned pupil in the *pesantren*, who would then have sufficient status to take over the leadership of the *pesantren* from him. Occasionally, a *kiai* is also believed to be endowed with supra-natural power, known locally as *ilmu laduni*. In his work, Van Bruinessen cites that for the Javanese, Mecca is also a '*pusat ngelmu*', indicating it is also

a place for those who desire to acquire immaterial or imminent power.[46] Importantly, all *pesantren* leaders are *hajji*.

> By fostering the public image that *gus* inherit the spiritual attributes of their fathers, the *kyai* aim to legitimize their sons as their rightful successors. This is very important, because *pesantren* are simultaneously public institutions in the sense that they involve public interests, and the private property of the *kyai*. Their sons are in danger of being replaced by able "outsiders" (non-kin) (ibid).[47]

In fact, the leadership of a *pesantren* will always end up in the hands of the *kiai*'s immediate family, whether consanguineal or affinal. The term of a leadership period is not limited, usually the successor will remain in this position until his death. In official records, the *kiai*'s name always appears as a leader, even though in everyday reality, particularly in *pesantren* for girls, his wife, daughter, mother, or even sister will have a dominant role. When I visited *Pesantren* al-Fatimiyah, the biggest sub-*pesantren* in the well-known *Pesantren* Tambak Beras of Jombang in 2003, its leader was Kiai Nasir Abd. Fattah, although his wife was also actively involved in the teaching and in leadership. Her mother, Nyai Musyarrofah, was the *nyai sepuh* (senior *nyai*) and was consulted in all the *pesantren*-related matters, her position resembling that of the chair of the *pesantren* advisory board. At that time, Nyai Musyarrofah still led the communal prayers of the *pesantren* female pupils in the small mosque in the compound of the *pesantren* for girls. In *Pesantren* Lirboyo, both daughters of Kiai Anwar were active in managing the two *pesantren* for girls in the compound. In the traditional *pesantren* of Pacul Gowang, Kiai Aziz Mansur was assisted by both his wife and his sister, Nyai Farida, who was well-grounded in Qur'anic studies and had memorized whole passages of the Quran.

In his work, Dhofier describes the *kiai* as the pivotal figure in a *pesantren*, a person who exudes enormous religious authority, particularly in his own *pesantren*. He describes the *kyai* as "the source of autonomy of power and authority".[48] Dhofier's approach in his examination of the figure of a *kiai* is based on his research in 1977-1978, and since it appeared, it has dominated the bulk of the discourse in research on the *pesantren*, particularly in Java. Previously, Geertz had understood a *kiai* in terms of being a 'cultural broker'.[49] Horikoshi sees him as an agent of social change.[50] For his part Dhofier emphasises the central figure of a *kiai*.[51] At the present time, some *pesantrens* have been transformed into collective leaderships, their leaders chosen from various people among the *kiai*'s descendants, both his sons [in-law] or his daughters [in-law]. When I conducted the fieldwork in Jombang in 2003, several

pesantrens in Jombang had already adopted this kind of leadership, for instance, several sub-*pesantrens* in *Pesantren* Tambak Beras were led by the descendants of Kiai Wahab Chasbullah. Kiai Nasir Abd. Fattah is the leader of *Pesantren* Putri al-Fatimiyyah, and Nyai Munjidah is also the leader of another sub-*pesantren* of Tambak Beras. In *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafiiyah Seblak, the sons [in-law] and daughters [in-law] of Nyai Djamilah have assumed the collective leadership. Each of them has various students lodged in the *pondok* (dormitories) attached to their houses, although the majority of the students live in the *pondok* near Nyai Mahsunah's residence. Once *Pesantren* Tebuireng was under the leadership of the late Kiai Yusuf Hasyim. In his era, the *pesantren* had a *majelis tarbiyah wal al ta'lim* which resembled a consultative board to discuss any policies issued by the *pesantren*. This is yet another deviant type of central leadership chosen by a particular *kiai*.

The *pesantren* educational system founded on a family-based organisational principle "turned out to be highly effective in integrating members with diverse social, linguistic, ethnic, regional, and kinship background".[52] When the family principle is applied to the organisation of a *pesantren*, the *kiais* embody a father figure, while *nyais* represent mother figures. In most instances, a *nyai* does have some limited interaction with the *pesantren* male pupils, a *kiai* while very seldom has any interaction with the female pupils, either in terms of quality or number. Now in an era in which the number of female pupils makes up almost half of the total number of *pesantren* students in Indonesia, the demand for actively involved *nyais* is steadily increasing in the segregated education setting of a *pesantren*.

All *nyais*, whatever their qualifications, are 'leaders' for their female students, in other words they could be said to represent the *kiai*'s leadership for the female students. In most cases, the *nyais* will be the coordinators of the female *pesantren*. As leaders of a *pesantren*, their main responsibility is to lead the female pupils in communal prayers, but some of them also run a regular programme in which they offer *taushiyah* (advices or guidance) to the students, even without being officially assigned to a formal position in the structure of *pesantren* leadership. This sort of construction will continue as long as *pesantren* education continues to be based on the familism system. The emergence of a new religious consciousness in the Indonesian community since the 1980s has resulted in a demand among the ordinary people for various types of instruction in religious knowledge, mostly in the form of *majelis taklim*. The majority of Badan Keordinasi Majelis Taklim (the Coordinating Body for Islamic Study Groups) members in Indonesia are women. As Frisk has discovered in her book, women's engagement in this sort of religious learning group in Malaysia is attributable to the fact that most of them are housewives who have more flexible time on their hands,

while their husbands are occupied with earning an income for the family.[53] Likewise, the participants in *majelis taklim* in Indonesia are also almost always women. With her qualifications and educational background in Islamic teaching, the role of the *nyai* in this regard is strategic. She mediates the interaction between her *pesantren* and community and simultaneously negotiates the interpretation of modernity for rural women in villages, a task in which the *majelis taklim* is just one vehicle. This situation is similar to what Geerz has defined as a 'cultural booker' in his work.[54]

Nyai of Pesantren: 'Santri ibuism'?

Since the early twentieth century, Indonesian women have been strongly identified with the concept of motherhood in the nationalist movements and women organisations. At the first Women's Congress in 1928, a decision was made by both religious and non-religious participants to consider motherhood the highest calling.[55] This emphasis on motherhood continued throughout the struggle for independence, particularly in the Japanese period (1942-45), when women were expected to perform a motherly role in caring for soldiers and others caught up in those difficult times. Therefore, after the Declaration of Independence in August 1945, "organised women were expected to continue to honour a notion of motherhood that includes caring for wider society".[56]

The familial terms for father, *'bapak',* and mother, *'ibu',* have assumed strong political connotations in the Indonesian context. *'Ibuism'* as an ideological concept cannot be equated with the English idea of motherhood, because it covers a wider range of roles for women as mothers, in addition to those related to purely maternal duties.[57] The nascent Indonesian society called upon mothers to put their shoulders to the wheel in the task of building a new nation-state; and to a greater degree than the men, they were expected to do this disinterestedly. The promotion of *ibuism* meant that women existed in a situation where the public and the private were not strictly separate.[58]

In constructing the ideal of State womanhood, or State *ibuism,* the newly independent nation adopted some of the Javanese ideals of gender relations. The appointment of Sukarno as the first president of the Republic marked the victory of secular nationalist values and paved the way for the dominance of Javanese cultural traits at the national level. This situation also affected the terminology used to articulate gender identities in the new nation, so that, for example, the word *'wanita'* meaning a woman replaced the term *perempuan,* which can also be translated as 'woman'. The subtle difference is that *'wanita'* is a Javanese word that connotes ladylike behaviour, typical of the Javanese middle class,[59] whereas *perempuan* is a more rounded word for woman.

Sukarno addressed women as '*kaum ibu*' (group of mothers) in his call to the nationalist movement, suggesting that motherhood extended to much more than purely maternal duties. Since the very beginning of the independent Indonesian State, "the cultural construction of the family has been the domain where national politics and identity are contested".[60] Women's role as mothers required them to care for the nation, an idea explicitly expressed in the following speech delivered by the first Indonesian vice-president, Muhammad Hatta:

> The task for the present is raising the people with good character and a sense of responsibility. Next to the school teacher it is the mother at home who must lay the basis for the character formation of children. For this reason, the education and training of children, especially girls who will mostly become mothers in future, must be the subject of great efforts by the women's movement, as well as the health and education of society.[61]

This attitude did not diminish during Suharto's presidency, in fact it was actually reinforced. Shiraishi argues that to understand the Indonesian family, it is important to guard against taking such common notions as father, mother, and child/children for granted:

> ... [F]or anyone who learns Indonesian should be familiar with the politico-familial language of father, mother, child, and family, which is there in Indonesia's everyday life. Yet it is important to underline the oddity about all this; Suharto runs the State and guides the nation as father president; his officials as well as citizens follow him as children and the entire nation is imagined as family. This is odd. We know Indonesia's cultural heterogeneity as an anthropological paradise ... There are many family systems in Indonesia not just one, and yet Indonesia is called "family" and imagined as such. What kind of family is it then that singularly represents this multi-ethnic nation as a family?[62]

Familism is closely related to the national concept of the Indonesian State. Suharto, for example, enjoyed the status of '*Bapak Pembangunan*' (the Father of Development). Bearing all this in mind, it is unquestionably possible to make the broad generalization that Indonesian State policies tend to define women in terms of their relationship to men.[63] This tendency is reflected in the *Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara* (GBHN, The Guidelines for the National Policy), introduced by the Indonesian government in 1992 and subsequently reissued on a yearly basis. The role of women in relation to State development is explicitly set out in the Guidelines. A woman should be the wife and associate of

her husband, an educator and cultivator of the younger generation, a controller/regulator of the household, a worker who contributes to the family's income and a member of community organisations, particularly those dedicated to organising women.[64] Sjahrir has said that the Guidelines represent an instance of State interference in women's activities, as they consider the family the main unit within which women's activities unfold, and by so doing, they restrict the full range of women's roles.[65]

Suryakusuma introduced the concept of State *ibuism* to refer to the ideology of the Indonesian State, which defines women as appendages and companions to their husbands, procreators of the nation, mothers and educators of children, housekeepers, and members of Indonesian society, in that order. State *ibuism,* in Suryakusuma's eyes, is "part and parcel of the bureaucratic State's effort to exercise control over Indonesian society".[66] The adoption of elite Javanese culture as the ideological macro-structure of Suharto's New Order regime created a homogenous hegemonic image of womanhood and gender relations in Indonesia.[67] The cultural expressions of this ideal are married women who dedicate their lives tirelessly to their husbands and children. The success of their husband's career and the enhancement of their children's education define the parameters of the wife's role. Suharto inculcated citizenship ideals that were premised on a restrictive notion of gender relations, in which men were associated with the public sphere and women with the domestic field. By promoting the notion that women's primary role was to be housewives, the State could control them through their husbands, who were in turn controlled by the State through their public activities. This enabled the regime to limit women's participation in public life without the use of direct coercion or physical restriction. In his autobiography, in the chapter entitled "Concerning Our Women", Suharto has argued that the main task of Indonesian women's organisations was "to bring Indonesian women to their correct position and role, that is as the mother in a household (*ibu rumah tangga*) and simultaneously as a motor of development".[68]

The New Order's ideology delineating women's roles led to the establishment of various women's organisations, most of them subordinate branches of the bureaucratic departments in which the women's husbands worked. One of them is Dharma Pertiwi, which brings together the wives of the Indonesian military, but the most notable among them are Dharma Wanita (the organisation of the wives of the civil servants) and PKK (*Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*, Family Welfare Movement). In these organisations, a woman's status and position are ranked according to her husband's position in the bureaucratic hierarchy of the nation. For instance, only a wife of a chairman of another organisation can be the chairperson of a women's organisation, regardless of her

capabilities. The aim of Dharma Wanita as written into its constitution is to increase women's participation in national development that suit the nature/duty (*kodrat*) of woman as wives and housewives. It should be noted that Dharma Wanita covers, without exception, all of the wives of civil servants, and its membership is spread over the whole country, down to the smallest government administration unit and even extends to every Indonesian Representative Office abroad. When the government declared that one of the duties of women as wives was to support their husbands in development (*pembangunan*), this meant that Dharma Wanita had to guarantee unified family voting for Golkar, the [political] faction of the government.[69]

A notable example of how women can negotiate creatively and manipulate their roles as mothers and carers comes from the organisation called "*Suara Ibu Peduli*" (The Voice of Caring Mothers). The original aim of the organisation was to provide cheaper baby formula to counter the high cost of living during the economic crisis at the end of the New Order regime. Since its inception, the organisation has also been engaged in more explicit political activities, such as supporting student demonstrations against Suharto's presidency.[70] This has been described by Arivia as "baby formula politics struggling for the public field".[71] Budianta has argued that the work of *Suara Ibu Peduli* has raised political awareness among women across different levels of Indonesian society, from national to local, including rural communities.[72] The image of '*ibu*' also inevitably cropped up in Megawati's political struggle for the presidency. Machali states that, "what comes to foreground is the *ibu* (mother) image rather than the masculine image of 'being in power' she used fighting for the presidency".[73] To buttress her argument, Machali quotes Megawati's speech (Kompas, 12 October 1999), in which the latter defined herself as an *ibu* to her political followers, particularly those of younger generation. "To my children in the whole country, I urge you to go back to work with sincerity. Do not do things drawn from emotion, because you [now] witness your mother standing here".[74] This appeal was Megawati's response to the riots that occurred after the 1999 General Election, sparked by the anger of her younger followers that she had not been elected to be the fourth Indonesian president, although her party had won the election.

If Javanese cultural ideals imply that a woman's position is bound up with her husband's,[75] it also follows that they also apply just as aptly to the figure of the *nyai*. Literally, *nyai* is a term that designates a married woman.[76] As Marcoes (1992) demonstrates in her research, the status of a *nyai* is inextricably bound up with the position of her husband or father. When a woman marries a *kiai*, she automatically becomes a *nyai*, regardless of her educational or family background, not forgetting that

it is common for a *kiai* to marry a daughter of another *kiai*. To a large extent, a *nyai* derives her power from her relationship to a *kiai*.[77]

As a consequence, her social position contains elements of both *priyayization* and *ibuism*.[78] Nieuwenhuis states that the concept of *ibuism* relates to women who are looking after a family, a group, a class, a company or the State, without demanding any share in power or prestige in return.[79] A *nyai* can be interpreted as an '*ibu*', mother, for the *santri* community. In most cases, a *nyai* has the unofficial power to act on behalf of a *kiai*, particularly when dealing with female students. Whether or not her name is formally recorded in the structure of *pesantren* leadership, she is the 'female leader' in the *pesantren*.

As inferred above, endogamous marriage has been commonly practised in the *pesantren* world in Java, as it is regarded as one of the ways to maintain the continuity of the *pesantren* tradition. When a daughter of a *kiai* marries another *kiai*, she also establishes a link between the two *pesantrens*, thereby sustaining and expanding the *pesantren* network. As a consequence, a *nyai* embodies and acts out *ibuism* in two respects: on the one hand, she gains derivative power from the position of her husband or father, while on the other, she plays the role of a symbolic mother to the *pesantren* [female] pupils. Most importantly, leaving these two roles aside, it should be noted that some *nyai*s build on the ascribed status inherent in their position and contribute to the public leadership of the *pesantren* and beyond in their own right.

When a woman becomes a *nyai* either by birth or marriage, this status comes with particular inherent 'duties' and 'demands' from both the *pesantren* and the local community. If she is capable and willing, she can attain a significant position in the *pesantren* leadership and in the community as a whole. A *nyai* who is thoroughly competent in Islamic learning typically acts as an instructor for female students. Some *nyais* run the *majelis taklim* (Islamic Learning Council) for the local women. There are also some who have been active members and held prominent positions in *Muslimat* and *Fatayat* NU, or have pursued wider activities in the political arena. In some cases, *nyais* have been given the right to manage a *pesantren* for girls,[80] and in others they have become the sole directors or leaders of the entire *pesantren*, although such an event is still quite rare. Her position allows a *nyai* to act publicly to bring some benefit to the local community as well. Nowadays, the younger generation of *nyais* is better educated, many have attained higher degrees and acquired a range of specialist skills.[81] Some of them have pursued their Islamic studies at various well-known Islamic universities in Indonesia. The *pesantren* welcomes and utilises these women's resources, as qualified and skilled women are in considerable demand.

In her research on female preachers in Jakarta and West Java, Marcoes discussed two main categories of *muballighah* (female preachers), namely *nyai* and *ustazah*,[82] and Faiqoh makes a distinction between those *nyais* who have mastered the Islamic sciences and are active in religious activities and those who are simply *kiai*'s wives. Besides their domestic duties, the *nyais* in the first category also engage in social and religious activities in the local community, principally by assuming the role of the *muballighah*.[83] A *muballighah* is described as a mediator in communicating religious discourse, not only in matters pertaining to eternal life, but more prosaically in those relating to daily life, ranging from personal relations to family health, education and other social issues.[84] Although a *nyai* with special qualifications in understanding Islamic sciences will serve to be a mediator for society in communicating Islamic discourse, if she were to concentrate just on her role as a *muballighah,* this self-imposed restriction would reduce some of the other significant public roles and contributions a *nyai* can assume and make. My observations in the field suggest that some *nyais* do indeed act as female preachers in a *majelis taklim*, but over and above this activity, they are engaged in different public professions and undertook various roles, such as being an instructor/teacher or to some extent also lecturers, religious judges, political leaders or members of the House of Representatives.

As immediate family members of *kiai*s, *nyais* also attain particular [derivative] 'power' or authority in the hierarchical Javanese culture and the patrichal leadership of a *pesantren*, in which a *kiai* is the central figure.[85] I shall describe and define the ways in which they live, relate to others and think of themselves and their own identity as *pesantren* figures, exemplifying '*santri ibuism*'.[86] With these resources at their disposal, some *nyais* can also transcend the derivative power and authority accorded them by their kinship status into different and considerable patterns of agency. They are able to do this through the interplay of what some feminists have termed the public and private spheres. This sort of interplay of female power in a *pesantren* context, in which a *nyai* manages a 'negotiation' between the public and private spheres of her life, with the resources and status at her disposal and her personal qualifications, will also have a significant meaning for other female groups in the *pesantren* educational setting, particularly those of the female students. The position provides active, qualified *nyais* with the opportunity to assume greater agency and extend their public participation beyond the *pesantren* boundaries, farther than what would be expected of her in her position as just a *nyai* or an '*ibu*' for the *pesantren*. Some *nyais* from *pesantrens* I observed in Jombang were also members of the local parliament. One of them had previously been appointed a religious judge. Such public positions do not have any specific bearing on their duties

in *pesantren* affairs. Nevertheless, as a *Nyai*[87] of a *pesantren*, each one also assumes such duties as leading the communal prayers for the *santriwati* (female students), undertaking instruction in the classroom and giving the female students *tausiyah* (guidance and counselling) on a regular basis.

All the rights and roles those *nyais* have achieved are also partly associated with their status as immediate members of a *kiai*'s family, for which the notions of *ibuism* and *priyayization* would be the ways to foster such a power and influence. Their position also suggests the complex intersection of various aspects of culture, religious values and the notion of womanhood in the lives of *pesantren* women, combined with the concept of charisma, also found among the main figures of traditional Islam,[88] and the concept of *barakah* (a bounty of blessing). When I attended an inauguration ceremony for those students who had completed their *pesantren* education, a father whose son was the best student believed that the success of his son was attributable to the "*barakah* of *ibu nyai*". The *kiai* of the *pesantren* had passed away, his son had taken over the leading and management of the *pesantren*, but the happy father referred the *barakah* to the *nyai*, not her son who is formally the head of the *pesantren*. Another example in which *barakah* is also attributed to a *nyai* is found in the life of Nyai Khoiriyah. After she had just returned from Mecca where she had lived for nineteen years, several [female] students came to study in her *Pesantren* Seblak for the express purpose of obtaining a share in her *barakah*. Their attitude reveals that spiritual power is not only inherited by or belongs to a man, women are equally able to earn it. In the case of *Pesantren* Nahdlatul Wathan in Lombok, the daughter of Tuan Guru is also believed to have inherited the spiritual power of her father,[89] and to have become his rightful successor of both the Nahdlatul Wathan organisation and of the actual *pesantren*.

Another pivotal aspect of traditional Islam found in a *pesantren* is its connection to Sufi practices. *Tarekat* and *pesantren* are closely interconnected, and therefore it is institutions like *pesantren*, *surau* or *dayah* that disseminate and preserve the *tarekat* orders. Are *nyai*s also involved in this aspect of the *pesantren*? Initially, it was not part of my plan to pay attention to *tarekat* in my research, but I changed my plans when during the fieldwork I observed some *pesantren* women were very actively involved in *tarekat* orders, even leading their rituals. One such person is Nyai Adlan of *Pesantren* Cukir, who is particularly involved in leading sufi practices in her *pesantren* for women from the nearby village. In the field, I also personally participated in the regular *manaqiban* activities of one *nyai*. The followers of this *manaqiban* read the *kitab* entitled *Manaqib*, a text derived from the *tarekat* Qadiriyyah. During the *manaqiban*, she also took the opportunity to deliver a sermon and to transfer

knowledge to the female congregation. In short, she was the leader of the whole process of the *manaqiban*.

Do *Pesantrens* Preserve Patriarchal Values?

As an institution the *pesantren* has been criticized for being traditionally patriarchal.[90] Regardless of the secular educational content it might include in its curriculum, a *pesantren* is perceived primarily as a religious institution. A *kiai/nyai* couple and their students are considered to be the 'guardians' of Islamic traditions, as these have been inscribed in the *kitab kuning*. Musdah Mulia, the director of *Lembaga Kajian Agama dan Jender* (the Institute for Religion and Gender Studies), has said that the patriarchal system in which women are subordinated is very evident in religious institutions, including *pesantren*. He was especially critical of the textbooks on marital life or on the social relationship between husband and wife used in *pesantrens* that still convey a strong patriarchal impression by placing women in and restricting them to the domestic sphere.[91] Mulia is not the only scholar to have criticized the patriarchal traditions and values of the *pesantren*. The works of Sabine Kuyper,[92] Robin L. Bush,[93] Anik Farida,[94] and Mas'udi[95] also give critical accounts of the gender relations and values in the *pesantren* world. *Pesantren* education has been criticised for having a gender bias, which is not confined to its curriculum and/or the textbooks used, but also permeates the structural system of its leadership. Husein Muhammad, a *kiai* from a *pesantren* in West Java, has passed a specific comment on the common principles of *pesantren* leadership succession:

> *Kiai* or *ulama* often explain that men and women are God's created beings who have an equal position before Him. They also have the same obligation to worship Him and to perform the moral duty of *amr m'ruf nahy munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil acts). They are equally urged to pursue knowledge (*ilm*), as the prophet said: "to pursue knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim man and Muslim woman". However, such ideas of gender equality are absent when it comes to practical matters. Leadership rights in *pesantrens* remain the exclusive rights of men. If a *kiai* passes away, his successor must be his son, even if the first child is a daughter who may have more intellectual capacities than subsequent sons. If the *kiai* has only daughters, then the leadership will be passed on to his brother or his son-in-law.[96]

This is just one of the characteristics of the patriarchal *pesantren* leadership that has been maintained over the time. However, as I mentioned in the previous section, women can and do cultivate their path to *pesantren* leadership by their manipulation of the *ibuism* concept, assisted in their efforts by the changes in the models of *pesantren* leadership itself. For instance, recently while under the leadership of Kiai Yusuf Hasyim, *Pesantren* Tebuireng, where once the *kiai* ruled supreme as the sole decision maker for all *pesantren* affairs, a *majelis tarbiyah wa ta'lim* (Board of Education and Instruction) was introduced as a consultative board to oversee the running of its educational programme. If a *kiai* does decide to take the concept of 'male religious leader' literally, the resultant idea, that a *kiai* is one of the basic elements of the *pesantren*, fails to describe the reality of *pesantren* directed by women, including such examples as *Pesantren* Seblak, under the leadership of Nyai Khoiriyah, *Pesantren* Nahdlatul Wathan, Lombok West Nusa Tenggara, which is led by the daughter of the late Tuan Guru Zainuddin[97] or a model of collective leadership such as *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Seblak. It also overlooks the fact that a number of *pesantrens* for girls across Indonesia are led by women.

In their formal teaching arrangements, one of the characteristics of *pesantren* education is [educational] segregation. A number of *pesantrens* still observe the principle that women are not allowed to teach a male class, but paradoxically the reverse does not apply. Haidlor Ali Ahmad, who has done research on the topic of gender equality and the empowerment of women in *pesantren*, mentions one inconsistency applied in the *pesantren* he observed: although women were their formal leaders and had power to control the male staff, they were still not allowed to teach male classes.[98] One of the *nyai* interviewed in the field said, "the reason behind this was the stressing of the guarding of chastity", but having said this, she immediately questioned her own statement "What is the difference if a male teacher teaches female pupils, it is just the same, isn't it?" Nevertheless, in the history of the majority of *pesantrens*, the physical segregation of men and women in their educational system has been axiomatic, and so far there has been no sign of significant changes in this area. Nevertheless, as shown in this book (Chapter Four), some *Nyai*s are perfectly capable of negotiating and creating more dynamic roles for themselves, and eliciting a creative synthesis in the polarised and segregated learning tradition of *pesantren*.

Pesantren and Their Affiliated [Women's] Organisations

The *pesantren* has close links with various organisations, most notably the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and its subordinate organisations, including

its two women's branch organisations, Muslimat or Fatayat NU. The New Order government considered *pesantrens* a medium through which it could communicate with the local people. *Pesantren* leaders were invited to support a wide range of government programmes, perhaps most significantly those related to family planning. At that time, the Muslimat NU, the association of *pesantren* women, was likewise involved in a number of programmes to assist in socialising the national family planning initiative and other development issues, the dispersion of charity in the society and *dakwah*.[99]

Nahdlatul Ulama and Its Women's Wing Organisation

Almost without exception, all *nyai* are affiliated to either the Muslimat or the Fatayat NU organisations, and their affiliation to these organisations is revealed in their social activities. Many among them find that the Fatayat/Muslimat NU is the channel best suited to their broader socio-religious participation. The Muslimat and the Fatayat NU have also provided an outlet for their political activities. In *Gender, Politics and Islam*, Therese Saliba et al. consistently provide evidence that, through their participation in both religious and nationalist movements, women "often achieve some form of political agency, self-realization, or self-representation, as well as a sense of community, even as the patriarchal values and discourses of the movement limit this agency".[100] Some *pesantren* women discover that their exposure to wider organisations outside *pesantren*, particularly the Muslimat NU, offers them access to greater agency in the public socio-political life beyond their *pesantren*. In fact, their access to political positions and leadership has actually been made possible through their engagement in the Muslimat NU. Pertinently, it should be recalled that at present both the Muslimat NU and the Fatayat NU are working on shaping the discourse on women and Islam in Indonesia, and are consciously tackling the gender bias embedded in *pesantren* education and the community. Despite the antithesis of traditionalist and progressive groups in the NU structure, some 'new' discourse that is examining women's issues has emerged as a significant internal discussion in this organisation.[101]

The majority of *nyai* are able to enjoy benefits through their involvement in organisations like the Muslimat NU or Fatayat NU. Positions of importance come within their grasp, and the door is opened to their engagement in the current public discourse, including contemporary gender issues, as discussed above. One shining example is Nyai Abidah of Jombang who was the member of *konstituante* (parliament) as a representative of the Muslimat NU. Turning to the discourse, Nyai Noer Chalida of Kediri provides an outstanding example of how the Muslimat NU or an organisation like P3M, which was founded and is

led by NU activists, has shaped her perspectives on women's issues. This did not happen overnight, indeed it was a long and somewhat arduous journey, following a trail strewn with various trainings, workshops, dialogues and discussions. Her engagement in this kind of discourse has not been confined to the Muslimat NU, it extended to other organisations such as P3M. Because of her position as a leading figure in the *pesantren*, she was also able to transfer this model of understanding to her institution.

Although a *pesantren* is not subordinated structurally to any particular organisation, most of them, especially in East Java, have a strong affiliation to the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Most personalities in the *pesantren* world are also prominent members of this organisation, and hold positions on the Majelis Syuriah (Supreme Religious Council of NU) and the Majelis Tanfidziyah (Executive Board of NU). Any attempt to define what NU is, what it represents and what it stands for cannot avoid the concept of tradition. Tradition is the essence of its self-perception and self-definition. There is no single Indonesian (or Javanese) term which covers the entire semantic range of this self-conscious traditionalism. To cover the discrepancy, foreign loanwords such as '*tradisi*' and '*tradisional*' are often used. Fealy and Barton have classified NU history into three main phases: the initial phase as a socio-religious organisation; a second phase as either a political party or a formal component of a party; and the third phase marking its return to its socio-religious activities, in which the emphasis has been laid on improving the dialogue between the *ulama* and upgrading Islamic schools.[102]

The majority of the leaders of the Muslimat are the wives or daughters of the *kiai*[103] or former *pesantren* students.[104] Adherence to the *pesantren* culture, with its emphasis on devotion, independence, cooperation and discipline, is essential to Muslimat members.[105] In its first period, the Muslimat was an integral part of the NU organisation. The idea of establishing a women's section was initially raised during the Fifteenth National Congress of NU held in 1940. The Muslimat was formally approved as a '*badan otonom*' (autonomous body) in 1946.[106] When NU became a political party in 1952, the Muslimat NU strove to carry out NU programmes affecting women, making a concerted effort to promote women's religious and national awareness, and educate them about their legal rights and responsibilities.[107]

During the Twentieth National Congress in Surabaya, the Muslimat produced significant recommendations on a range of social issues. During the congress, it was stated that some decisions handed down by the *Pengadilan Agama* (religious court) had discriminated against women, especially in family matters like divorce, polygyny and inheritance. It was decided that the Muslimat should conduct a programme to raise women's awareness of their legal rights. After the first general election

in 1955, some Muslimat members, among them Nyai Abidah from Seblak Jombang, became judges of the *Pengadilan Agama*.[108] Other recommendations made at the congress had to do with the public participation of women. It was agreed that women should be nominated for positions in the State bureaucracy and as candidates for the House of Representatives. In fact, one of the key recommendations was expressed in a petition to the central committee of NU asking it to include members of the Muslimat on the list of priority candidates for the House of Representatives. The preamble to the petition argued that, as a religion and a way of life, Islam offered women the possibility of emancipation on the basis of the *kodrat* (nature) of women themselves. It stressed that any barriers to achieving this emancipation had their roots in socio-cultural problems. The Muslimat also struggled to eliminate the tradition of erecting a *tabir* (curtain) to segregate women from men at NU meetings and ceremonies.[109]

In the first general election in 1955, NU gained forty-five seats in DPRS (the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Sementara), the House of Representatives, and 10 per cent of them were held by cadres of the Muslimat.[110] When DPRS was abrogated by Sukarno and a new commission called DPRG was put in its place, Muslimat members still held seven positions in this commission, and also had two seats in MPRS (House of Assembly). Like NU, the Muslimat was a fierce opponent of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). When NU blamed PKI for the attempted coup in 1965 and recommended that the party be outlawed, the Muslimat associated itself with the declaration, and Nyai Solichah Wahid Hasyim personally signed the petition.

Observation shows that an organisation like the Muslimat is still busily immersed in the struggle for dominance between the traditional and non-traditional domains. Indeed, the very structure of the organisation itself has created a division between these two domains by assigning women traditional female roles, such as education, health and social welfare. Even today, the women in the NU are not eligible for any high-level committees, such as the *Badan Syuriah* (Supreme Religious Board), ostensibly because they have their own organisations. Despite this rather spurious argument, the idea has not been entirely dismissed. Said Aqiel Siradj, who is counted among the leading NU figures and is currently the elected leader of the NU organisation, has said that:

> [T]here is no reason that prohibits women from becoming members of the *Syuriah* [Supreme Religious] Board ... Therefore, if now there are some capable *nyais,* the time has come to give them the opportunity to become members of either the *Syuriah* or *Mustasyariah* boards, because Hasan Bashri (d. 110 H) said *fuqaha*[111] is not restricted to men, but can include all those whose

> opinion can be accepted as a *fatwa,*[112] whether these be blind men, slaves or women.[113]

Feillard, a French scholar who has devoted some of her work to NU and gender issues in Indonesia, described her impressions on the dynamics at work among some of the NU women who tried to reaffirm the political rights of women among their male counterpart NU members at the 1999 NU congress. She mentions one female participant who tried to explain that Islam also recognised women's political rights.[114] According to Feillard, this woman's ability to reinforce her facts by referring to the Quran and the *sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) convinced the forum, the majority of whose participants were *kiai.* Consequently, some *kiai*s who had previously strongly rejected the idea, were quickly won over and became loyal supporters of women's emancipation. She suggests that the NU women had to find the way to negotiate with their male counterparts (*kiai*s) to be able to define their own political rights. The upshot was that it was agreed that women in Islam are not subordinate, and Islam allows both men and women to serve the nation and society equally.[115] Of course, it goes with saying that Muslimat members had been actively involved in national politics long before the congress, so that the actual practice preceded the discourse. No resistance from the *kiai*s was recorded when Muslimat cadres became members of the House of Representatives. Effendi said that since that national congress, female NU intellectuals began to become involved in the forum of *bahsul masa'il,* in which the roles of their male counterparts had previously been overwhelmingly dominant.[116]

Some prominent Indonesian Muslims concerned with gender issues are also NU, Muslimat or Fatayat NU members. Among them are Masdar F. Mas'udi (director of P3M), K.H. Husein Muhammad (director of Rahima), Sinta Nuriyah Abd Rahman Wahid (*Forum Kajian Kitab Kuning, FK3*), Farha Ciciek (Rahima), Badriyah Fayumi and Khofifah Indar Parawansa (Muslimat NU), and Maria Ulfah Ansor (Fatayat NU), even Abdurrahman Wahid or Gusdur is one leading NU light who supports women's rights and gender equity/equality principles. All these people have endeavoured in their various ways to deconstruct the patriarchal discourse in Islamic jurisprudence, and through their efforts have advanced the debate on women's issues in relation to Islam.[117] The discourse on gender and Islam in NU circles is pretty dynamic,[118] particularly among the younger generation. As *pesantrens* are affiliated to NU, *kiais* are basically both members of and leading lights in NU. The *nyais,* especially those who are active, share in the leadership or are members of the Fatayat or the Muslimat NU. As far as *pesantren* women are concerned, the Fatayat or Muslimat NU are their socio-religious organisations. During my fieldwork, I found that almost all the *nyais* or

female *pesantren* figures I met were members of these organisations as they were aware that they are also the vehicles which smoothe their paths to wider public positions and appointments. In 1990, the Fatayat developed a more social-welfare-oriented organisation for women called the Yayasan Kesajahteraan Fatayat, which has no formal position in the NU structure.[119] It offers junior *kiais/nyais* intensive training, concentrating particularly on the issue of women's reproductive health, and naturally includes a discussion of Islam and the gender issue. The results of this training have been published in book form. One such volume is *Nyai, Kiai and Pesantren*, edited by Siti Zainab,[120] containing various articles written by [junior] *nyai* or *kiai* on the matters of gender and Islam.

The spirit of encouraging the empowerment of women can be traced back from the earliest days of NU. When Kiai Wahid Hasyim assumed the position of Minister of Religious Affairs, he strongly endorsed and supported the opening of the school for women religious judges. At the moment, Muslimat NU leaders are urging for a more gender egalitarian relationship, taking advantage of the channels offered by different organisations with the added agenda of eliminating gender-based violence. As these ideas are gradually finding wider acceptance in the Muslimat and Fatayat NU, it is no wonder that those *nyais* who are active in the Muslimat NU and Fatayat NU are also being socialised and enlightened by this discourse and by their exposure to the ideas, the workshops, the training and the seminars they have attended.

P3M and 'New' Islamic Organisations

The NGO Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat (P3M, Centre for *Pesantren* and Community Development) began its operations with work devoted to women's issues. This NGO also has a section for women known as the *fiqhunnisa',* through whose operations women's issues and the controversy about gender and Islam were gradually introduced to the *pesantren* community. These ideas promoted the empowerment of *pesantren* women by inviting them to become engaged in the programme, offering trainings, symposia and learning sessions in the framework of women's reproductive health to various *pesantrens*.[121] In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that the contact of *pesantrens* with women's issues in the 1990s was initiated by P3M through its *fiqhunnisa'*[122] programme, and some *pesantrens* in Java hosted sessions of the programme.[123] The P3M programme of the *fiqhunnisa'* has now come to an end, nevertheless, Lies Marcoes, the former head of the *fiqhunnisa'* programme, is convinced that it was quite successful, and that the ideas promoted through it are still being kept alive by organisations like Rahima or PUAN Amal Hayati. Masdar

F. Mas'udi, the director of P3M, is popularly known for initially raising the matter of the critical opinions on the ideas about women portrayed in the *kitab kuning*.[124]

P3M was among the leading organisations which began to disseminate the idea of "*hak-hak reproduksi perempuan*" (women's reproductive rights), which also did not overlook the duty of calling for egalitarian gender relationships in the *pesantren* community. *Hak-hak reproduksi perempuan* became the banner of the P3M programme on women's issues from the Islamic perspective in the framework of the *fiqh pemberdayaan* (empowerment of Islamic jurisprudence).

The *fiqhunnisa'* programme of P3M ended in 2000, but its place was taken by some other NGOs. Rahima emerged in 2000 and set to work to investigate gender issues in the *pesantren*. Besides Rahima, the NGO called PUAN Amal Hayati participated in this project aimed at popularising gender issues in *pesantrens*. This NGO set up various women's crisis centres in the *pesantrens* of East Java that were the research sites for this thesis. The word PUAN is an abbreviation of *Pesantren untuk Pemberdayaan Perempuan* (*Pesantren* for Women's Empowerment). What make Rahima and PUAN slightly different from one another is the fact that Rahima is more concerned with gender issues as a subject for discussion in a discourse in seminars, workshops and publications, whereas PUAN concentrates intensively on action, championing advocacy for women who are victims of domestic violence and other maltreatment.[125] At the time I was conducting my research, there were four pilot projects in the programme. In the meantime, Rahima and PUAN have launched their own periodical publications, the *Swara Rahima* magazine and the *Buletin Amal Hayati*. Among the readers and contributors to these publications are those from a *pesantren* background. Although these projects have opened up new perspectives on gender in the *pesantren*, it is still difficult to grasp their concrete impact in the face of some of the recalcitrant resistance they have met among *pesantren* leaders and the community at large. Nevertheless, by persisting with seminars, workshops and publications, plus ensuring the involvement of *pesantren* people in these programmes, more space has been created for bridging the gap between the text and the context.

The establishment of the NGO Cepdes (Centre for *Pesantren* and Democracy Studies) in 2000, ushered in a new model for NGO and *pesantren* interrelationships and for the scope of the influence exercised by the public. This NGO was established by a daughter of a *kiai*, Lily Zakiyah Munir, in an effort to re-initiate the activities and programmes of her *pesantren* of origin. Besides its headquarters in Jombang, Cepdes also has an office in Jakarta, which is specifically concerned with gender issues.[126] The Fahmina Institute, established by Kiai Husein Muhammad in his *pesantren* in Cirebon, West Java, also represents an

NGO that initially emerged from a relationship to a particular *pesantren* institution. Like Cepdes, the Fahmina Institute is specifically concerned with Islam and gender issues. The majority of the people engaged in these new organisations are also linked to Nahdlatul Ulama or its branch organisations like Muslimat or Fatayat NU, and therefore it would be fair to say that all of these organisations have a particular connection to and are concerned with the *pesantren* world.

3 Women and *Pesantrens* in Jombang

A Portrait from the Fieldwork[1]

A Glimpse of Jombang[2] District

Jombang is a region in East Java province, which is the most densely populated province in Indonesia. From a socio-religious perspective, the East Java province is recognised as being the heartland of the biggest Islamic organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Since the 1999 general election, the NU-affiliated political party, Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, National Awakening Party), has gained the greatest number of voters from this province. The majority of *pesantrens* in Indonesia have an affiliation to the NU organisation; in fact, two-thirds of the 8,445 *pesantrens* or 66.06 per cent of the total number of pe*santrens* are affiliated with NU. The number is even higher in East Java province, with 90 per cent of the *pesantrens* affiliated to the NU organisation.[3]

East Java had 2,648 *pesantrens* (23. 4 per cent of the total number of *pesantrens* in Indonesia) in 2000-01, and 2,953 *pesantrens* (23.1 per cent) in the 2001-02 school year. In the records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, East Java province ranks second after West Java in terms of the number of *pesantren* institutions.[4] However, although West Java has a higher number compared to East Java, the most important and well-known *pesantrens* in Indonesia are located in East Java.[5] Therefore, East Java has a strong association with the *pesantren* world. This is also supported by the fact that one area in East Java, namely Jombang, which was also the fieldwork area of this research, is popularly known as '*kota santri*' (the region of *pesantren* pupils).

The title of *kota santri* for Jombang can be understood in several ways. First of all, this area has a concentrated number of *pesantren* institutions, with large numbers of pupils coming to study there. Moreover, four influential *pesantrens*, particularly within NU organisations, Tebuireng, Bahrul Ulum Tambak Beras, Manbaul Ma'arif Denanyar and Darul Ulum Rejoso[6], are located there. In addition, three well-known Indonesian figures who were leading figures of NU (Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari, Kiai Wahab Chasbullah and Kiai Bisri Syansury) also came from *pesantrens* in Jombang. Hence, Jombang has a strong sense of

being the centre of *pesantren* education as well as being the centre of its affiliated organisation – Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

The 2003-04 statistics of the Department of Religious Affairs in Jakarta show that Jombang has at least seventy *pesantrens* spread over the area.[7] However, the data from the local Department of Religious Affairs of Jombang shows that the number of *pesantrens* was much higher than seventy. The 2003 figure from the Departemen Agama of

Figure 3.1 *Map of Jombang*

The location of four major pesantrens in Jombang
● = *Pesantren* Tambak Beras
★ = *Pesantren* Rejoso
■ = *Pesantren* Denanyar
▲ = *Pesantren* Tebuireng

Jombang suggests that there were 126 *pesantrens* in Jombang,[8] whilst the 2004 figure had a record of 142 *pesantrens* located in the area,[9] double the national statistic. The contradiction between the two figures is due to the fact that not all of the *pesantrens* listed by the local Department of Religious Affairs supplied the office with their details. Only seventy out of 146 *pesantrens* listed have already supplied their data to the local Department of Religious Affairs,[10] which provides the details to Jakarta. This fact also suggests that over time, the number of *pesantrens* in Jombang has increased markedly, thus giving even stronger weight to the title of Jombang as a town of *pesantren* pupils (*kota santri*).

Geographically, Jombang has a strategic position, being located in the centre of the East Java province. The eastern boundary of Jombang is Mojokerto district. Kediri and Malang areas are on the southern side. Nganjuk is on the western side and Lamongan on the northern side.[11] Geographically, Jombang is divided into three main areas. Firstly, the northern areas are made up of the sub-districts Plandaan, Kabuh, Ploso, Kudu, and Ngusikan. Secondly, the central area consists primarily of the agricultural areas of the sub-districts Bandar Kedungmulyo, Perak, Gudo, Diwek, Mojoagung, Sumobito, Jogoroto, Peterongan, Jombang, Megaluh, Tembelang, and Kesamben. Thirdly, the southern areas consist of sub-districts Ngoro, Bareng, Mojowarno and Wonosalam. In 2003, Jombang had 21 sub-districts and 306 villages with a population of 1,148,336. Population density is high, with an average of 990 persons per square kilometre (km^2). The majority of the Jombang population is Muslim, comprising 98.26 per cent. Protestants are 1.25 per cent, Catholics 0.27 per cent, Buddhists 0.13 per cent and Hindus 0.09 per cent.[12]

Diwek Sub-district

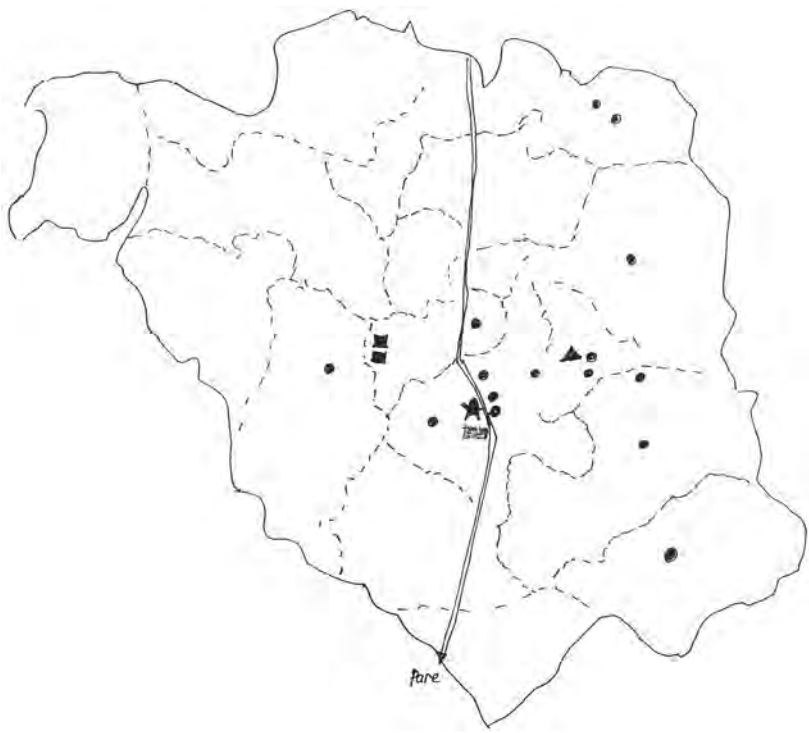
During the time of my fieldwork, I concentrated mostly on the Diwek area, where the main case study of *Pesantren* Seblak is located. It is in this area that the well-known *Pesantren* Tebuireng is also located, a *pesantren* which has been the centre of the *pesantren* world throughout Java and Madura, particularly in the period of its founder, Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary.[13]

Diwek sub-district consists of 47.7 km^2 divided into twenty villages. According to the statistical data of September 2003, Diwek had a population of 88,541, with the ratio of 42,472 men to 46,069 women. The majority of Diwek's population are Muslim, who comprise 88,088 persons. There are 36 Catholics, 416 Protestants and one Hindu. With that high number of Muslims, Diwek has 72 mosques and 308 *musholla*

(small mosques). In terms of employment, most of the people in Diwek are farmers and traders, with figures of 17,646 and 9,988 respectively.

The official data of Diwek in 2001 recorded that at least 19 *pesantrens*[14] are located in the area, with 60 *kiai*s (religious leaders/teachers) and 7,185 pupils. In 2004, the data from the Department of Religious Affairs Jombang suggested that there were at least 21 *pesantrens* located in Diwek. Apart from a high concentration of *pesantrens*, Diwek also has a high number of Islamic schools, ranging from kindergarten to tertiary educational level in Jombang. The Diwek area has 12 kindergartens, 39 elementary schools, four junior high schools (two public and two private), four senior high schools (all of them are private schools), 30 Raudhatul Athfals (Islamic kindergartens) with 1,595 pupils and 101 teachers, 32 Madrasah Ibtidaiyahs (Islamic

Figure 3.2 *Map of* pesantrens *location in Diwek*



Scale: 1: 100.000

■ ■ = *Pesantren* Seblak (Salafiyah al-Machfudz and Salafiyah Syafiiyah)

▲ = *Pesantren* paculgowang

▬ = *Pesantren* Cukir

★ = *Pesantren* Tebuireng

elementary schools) with 4,706 pupils and 206 teachers, 18 Madrasah Tsanawiyahs (Islamic junior high schools; two public and sixteen private) with 3,189 and 299 teachers, 14 Madrasah Aliyahs (Islamic senior high schools, all of them are private schools) with 3,564 pupils and 319 teachers. The high number of Islamic schools in Diwek is linked to the high concentration of *pesantrens* in the area. Almost all of the *pesantrens* have a schooling system within their compound to accommodate the need of pupils to obtain a formal schooling certificate.[15]

With a number of *pesantrens* and several other Islamic schools, Diwek, is a real miniature *'kota santri'* during the school semester. In Diwek, *pesantrens* are mostly concentrated in Cukir and Kwaron hamlets, located on the highway from Jombang to Pare. The spiritual aura of *kota santri* becomes more intensive during Ramadan. At that time, several *pesantrens* hold learning sessions or religious activities for both pupils and local people. *Pesantren* Tebuireng for instance, had a Ramadan class for the pupils, but it was like a 'general lecture' where some local community members also came to learn and sat down on the terrace of the *pesantren*. Not only that, the Ramadan class used a microphone, to make it accessible to other local people without necessarily having to be present in the complex of the *pesantren*. One evening during Ramadan, while I bought some small edibles from a store, the sale girl of the store was listening to the session of *kitab kuning* of *Pesantren* Tebuireng from the microphone. She also read the *kitab* with a pen in her hand while serving me. She said she herself had studied the *kitab kuning* being read when she was a pupil at a *pesantren*, nevertheless she felt it was always nice to review the *kitab kuning* each time she had an opportunity like this. By the end of Ramadan, the area is very quiet as the majority of pupils return back home for the semester break and celebrating the *Idul Fitri*[16] days.

A *pesantren* can also be an integral part of the local people's lives in Jombang, particularly in the villages where they are located. The relationship was much stronger when *pesantrens* did not supply the daily meal for the pupils, or before a minimarket inside the *pesantren* compounds was established. Pupils relied significantly on the local people for their daily needs, groceries, food, and other necessities. The *pesantrens* in the area had broad economic implications for the life of the surrounding community. A village like Cukir, with a densely populated number of *pesantrens*, seems to be more crowded and have more dynamic economic activities than other villages in the same sub-district of Diwek, including the capital. Photocopy and stationery businesses and small restaurants are quite common in the area, plus rental internet, bank and ATM machine. The area has a commercial motel as well, which is in fact not very common in the village or rural areas in Indonesia.

Moreover, besides the economic impact for the local people as discussed above, the existence of *pesantrens* coloured socio-religious aspects of community life in the given area. For instance, Diwek has a concentrated number of *majelis taklim*s (Islamic learning councils). In the Indonesian context, the term *majelis taklim* has a strong association as a place for women to learn Islamic knowledge.[17] The Badan Kontak Majelis Taklim Indonesia (BKMTI, the Board of Indonesian *Majelis Taklim* Association) is chaired by women, and almost all of the members are women. This is also true in the fieldwork area; the participants of the *majelis taklim* are mainly women. Almost all *pesantrens* set up a *majelis taklim*, which indicates their intention to organize religious and educational opportunities for women.

In the fieldwork area, I also had the opportunity to participate and observe some *majelis taklims* for women. Once, a *majelis taklim* was held in a *nyai*'s residence in Tebuireng. The local women gathered together in her house to listen to the Islamic sermon delivered by an invited religious teacher. The *majelis taklim* had more participants during Ramadan. The *nyai* only hosted the *majelis taklim*, but did not deliver the sermon to the participants. The *majelis taklim* had approximately 20-30 participants who were local women. During the *majelis taklim* gathering, the *nyai* was also there, and her presence among the participants had indeed significance for the others. From this case, I observed that, if for some reason a *nyai* is not able to deliver the sermon or to be an instructor herself for *majelis taklim*, she still felt responsible for arranging them for her community, and ensuring that the local people, particularly women, had access to this kind of socio-religious activity. Another religious gathering I took part in was the *manaqiban* in Paculgowang, led by a *nyai* from the local *pesantren*. Some 40-70 locals joined this *manaqiban*. Through this kind of activity, a *pesantren* maintains a close relationship with the local people, and at the same time the *pesantren* and their leaders, both *kiai* and *nyai*, extend their religious authority over both the *pesantren* and the local society. The participants are always women, and it is an effective method to deliver particular concepts and ideas. Once I observed a *nyai* in the field work area, who seriously encouraged the local women to let their daughters become well educated, and not marry them off at an early age.[18]

The message conveyed in the religious congregation is not always something related to *ibadah* (religious rituals), but also covers the daily lives and social problems faced by the society. In this case, a *nyai* could be an actor in conveying ideas of social change to her society through her agency.

One of *nyais* from an area outside Jombang also involved herself as a coordinator and regular instructor for a *majelis taklim* she held in her house. The female pupils of her *pesantren* prepared food, snacks and

drinks for the participants. Since about 80-100 participants turned up, the living room and some other parts of her house were full with the participants of this religious congregation. The pupils of her *pesantren* had been busy making preparations since after *maghrib* (dawn) time. The *nyai* said her late parents had trained her and engaged her in this kind of socio-religious activity when they were alive, therefore she felt responsible for continuing the traditions, more importantly her capability in transmitting the knowledge through her preaching and sermons to the participants had been an advantage. In the case of *manaqiban*, the *nyai* also followed her mother's path; her mother in her eyes had been someone who was concerned with sharing and providing opportunities for women to learn, yet learning here means particularly religious teaching and values. Family has been among strong factors that shape and develop the agency of some or even most *pesantren* women.

Pesantren *Tebuireng and Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary*

Looking at the *pesantren* world in Jombang, and more particularly in Diwek, we will unavoidably touch on the existence of the well-known *Pesantren* Tebuireng. *Pesantren* Seblak, which is the main case study of this research, also has a strong connection to this *pesantren*; and the founders of *Pesantren* Seblak are the main focus of this research. Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary himself is still perceived as a great and charismatic *pesantren kiai*, over half a century after his death, as well as a respected national religious leader. His religious authority has had a great influence on the *pesantren* network as well as on the local community. He was also a private instructor for teaching Islamic sciences to his daughter (Nyai Khoiriyah) and his granddaughter (Nyai Abidah), both of whom are discussed in detail in the next chapter. As a charismatic religious as well as *pesantren* leader himself, his support for women's education had a significant impact on the *pesantren* world, for NU and for local communities.

In the fieldwork area, most founding fathers or *kiai*s of *pesantrens* in Jombang or in Diwek have had a particular link with this *pesantren*. *Pesantren* Walisongo Cukir was founded by Kiai Adlan Ali, who was among Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary's pupils and then married Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary's niece. *Pesantren* Denanyar was founded by Kiai Bisri Syansury, his former pupil as well, then Kiai Bisri Syansury's daughter was married to Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary's son. *Pesantren* Madrasatul Quran, which is also located in Diwek, was founded by his grandson-in-law, Kiai Yusuf Mashar, and there are still some *pesantrens* in the area that were established by either graduates or the extended family of *Pesantren* Tebuireng. The *nyais* studied in this book were also related to Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary and *Pesantren* Tebuireng.

Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary established *Pesantren* Tebuireng on August 3, 1899 in Cukir, Sub-district Diwek, 8 km to the south of the capital district of Jombang, and located near a highway connecting Jombang and Pare. The *pesantren* was named after the hamlet in which it is located. This *pesantren* has not had an Arabic name as other *pesantrens* used to have. Before the establishment of the *pesantren*, Tebuireng was a hamlet referred to by the local people as a sort of 'black area' for its prostitution, gambling, etc. The existence of a *pesantren* in the area has acted as a counter-culture to the capitalist economic activities and their cultural impacts on the local people. The capitalist economy was represented by the establishment of a sugar factory, and the non-local culture which followed the capitalist economic activities was considered harmful to the identity of the socio-religious culture and tradition of the local people. Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary was the first leader of the *pesantren*. Upon his death in 1947, the leadership of the *pesantren* was 'inherited' by his sons and sons-in-law. From 1947 until 1950, Wahid Hasyim (his son) was the director of the *pesantren*. From 1951 until 1952, the director was Abdul Karim Hasyim (another son), followed by Achmad Baidlowi (his son-in-law) from 1951 until 1952; and from 1952-1965, Abdul Kholik Hasyim (his son).

A fact that is not commonly known and was not mentioned in other research on *Pesantren* Tebuireng is that Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary's first daughter, Nyai Khoiriyah, had also been a *Pesantren* Director in the transition period. This fact is only mentioned in *Buku Kenangan Peringatan Satu Abad Pesantren Tebuireng 1999* (The book on the memorial of one decade of *Pesantren* Tebuireng in 1999), in which Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim was also recorded as a director of the *pesantren* for the transition period before Kiai Yusuf Hasyim was appointed in 1965. The adopted son of Nyai Khoiriyah also confirmed this 'un-known' case, as he said at that time it was Nyai Khoiriyah who signed the certificates of graduation for the pupils of *Pesantren* Tebuireng.[19] Although it was a short period of time and a transition period, this fact is quite significant, because *Pesantren* Tebuireng was a *pesantren* for boys. There were no female pupils there. In such a case, it is very rare to find a woman in the position of a leader. When it was founded, *Pesantren* Tebuireng had no female pupils. In 2003 the *pesantren* began to accept female pupils, starting with 18 who were lodged in a 'luxurious' *pondok*.[20] Before that year, parents who wanted to send their daughters to *Pesantren* Tebuireng sent them to *Pesantren* Seblak, which is located nearby. As mentioned before, the *pesantren* was established by the immediate family of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary. Before 2003, for those parents who wanted to send their daughters to study in *Pesantren* Tebuireng and realized that there was no *pesantren* for girls, the usual choice was

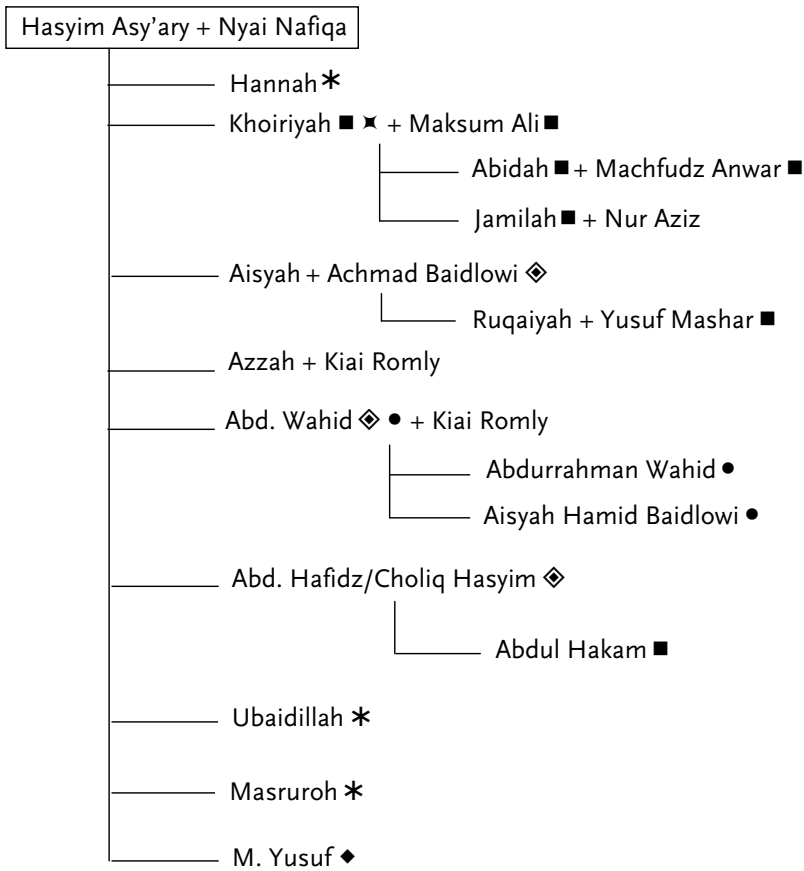
Pesantren Seblak. *Pesantren* Seblak acted as the *pesantren putri* (*pesantren* for girls) of *Pesantren* Tebuireng.

The popularity of *Pesantren* Tebuireng is inseparably linked to the figure of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary as a charismatic religious leader. Dhofier's research on the *pesantren* tradition also supports this theory, with his focus on the figure of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary, popularly known as '*hadratus syaikh*'[21]. In Hasyim Asy'ary's time, the pupils and *kiai*s from other *pesantrens* came together to live in (*mondok*), particularly during Ramadan (fasting month). He had a strong social religious influence and authority, not only among the *ulama*s in East Java, but also within the Indonesian community in general, especially in his capacity as NU leader.[22] The Japanese colonial government also has a record on Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary as one of the entries in an encyclopaedia on several influential figures of Java. This encyclopaedia, published in 1944 by the Gunseikabu (Japanese Military Government), said: "Hasyim Asy'ary, Kiai Haji Muhammad, a farmer[23] and a religious teacher at Tebuireng (Jombang). He was born in Gedang (Jombang) and studied in Mecca; he was the chairman of the NU organization."[24]

Hasyim Asy'ary was born on February 14, 1871.[25] In 1876, little Hasyim Asy'ary and his parents moved to a village, Keras, located in the southern part of Jombang. He learned from his father the basic study of reciting the Quran. Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary was a son of Kiai Asy'ary, the founding father of *Pesantren* Al-Asy'ary in Keras[26] Jombang. Kiai Asy'ary was not from Jombang originally. He came from Demak, an area in central Java, and married Halimah, a grandchild of Kiai Shoichah who founded one of the four great *pesantrens* in Jombang, namely *Pesantren* Tambak Beras. When he was fifteen, young Hasyim Asy'ary began to visit several *pesantrens* in East Java to learn the Islamic sciences from different *ulamas/kiai*s. He was a *santri kelana* (wandering *pesantren* pupil), who 'wandered' from one *pesantren* to another throughout East Java and Madura.[27] He was recorded as one of the pupils of Kiai Cholil Bangkalan[28] in Madura. In 1891, Hasyim Asy'ary studied at *Pesantren* Siwalan Panji Sidoarjo, and he was married off to the daughter of the *pesantren* leader. After this marriage, together with his wife and his father-in-law, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca. His wife passed away in Mecca after giving birth to a son, then the son also died, not long after his mother. Hasyim Asy'ary left Mecca and returned to Indonesia. Later on, he made a second journey to Mecca and spent an additional year living and learning there.[29] He was recorded as being among the pupils of several *ulama Jawi*[30] in Mecca, such as Syaikh Mahfudz al-Tirmasi[31], Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantani[32] and Syaikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabau[33].

Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary married again, this time to Nyai Nafiqah. They had ten children. Their first daughter, Hannah, was born in 1903 and

Figure 3.3 *The tree of Kiai Hasyim As'Ary's family*



✱ died in infancy
◈ former leaders of *Pesantren* Tebuireng
◆ former leaders of *Pesantren* Tebuireng
■ Founders or leaders of other *pesantrens*
● National leading figures of NU/Muslimat Fatayat NU
✖ former leader of *Pesantren* Tebuireng [in a transition period]

passed away in the same year. His second daughter was Khoiriyah, later married to Kiai Maksum Ali, who then founded *Pesantren* Seblak. From her marriage to Kiai Maksum Ali, Khoiriyah only had two daughters who lived: Abidah and Jamilah. Jamilah was the director of *Pesantren* Seblak from 1969 until 1988. She was also the chairperson of Muslimat NU East Java. She was married to Kiai Nur Aziz Ma'sum

from *Pesantren* Singosari Malang.[34] Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary's third child was Aisyah, who married Kiai Ahmad Baidlowi. The fourth child was Azzah, who married Kiai Idris from *Pesantren* Darul Ulum. The fifth child was Abdul Wahid Hasyim, who married Nyai Solichah from *Pesantren* Denanyar. The sixth child was Hafiz, but mostly known as Choliq, the seventh child was Abdul Karim, the eighth and the ninth children died in infancy, and the tenth one was Muhammad Yusuf; at the time this research conducted, Muhammad Yusuf was leader of *Pesantren* Tebuireng.

Almost of all his sons assumed the leadership of *Pesantren* Tebuireng. All of his daughters were married to *kiai*s or someone from a *kiai*'s family. Some of his grandchildren also had roles in and a strong attachment to the *pesantren* and NU community. His grandson, Abdurrahman Wahid, the fourth president of the Indonesian Republic, was among the figures involved in the leadership of *Pesantren* Denanyar, and a former leader of the NU organisation. In 2010 Abdurrahman Wahid was proposed by the Indonesian government for the title of '*pahlawan nasional*' (national hero) for his determined efforts and works, particularly in dealing with minority groups and pluralism in Indonesia. Another grandson, Abdul Hakam, established a *pesantren* in Tebureing called Darul Hakam. His granddaughters, Abidah and Jamilah, were among the leaders of *Pesantren* Seblak, another granddaughter, Ruqaiyah, married Kiai Yusuf Mashar, the founding father of *Pesantren* Madrasatul Quran, and is known as Nyai Ruqaiyah or Nyai Yusuf Mashar. As *pesantren* figures, they were all involved in NU and the Muslimat NU organization. Some of them even chaired either the main organisation of NU or its women's wing organization of Muslimat or Fatayat NU. His daughter Nyai Khoiriyah was among the leaders of Muslimat NU at the national level, whereas his granddaughters, Nyai Abidah and Nyai Jamilah, were the leaders of Muslimat in East Java province. His daughter-in-law, Nyai Solichah Wahid Hasyim, was also an influential Muslimat NU leader, who was then followed by her daughter, Aisyah Hamid Baidlowi.

Pesantrens for Girls in Jombang

The first *pesantren* for girls in Jombang was *Pesantren* Denanyar, and it was also the first female *pesantren* among the NU community. Initially, in 1917 Kiai Bisri Syansury only set up a learning session in his *pesantren* for male pupils. In 1919, due to the efforts of Nyai Nurkhodijah who invited the local girls, the *pesantren* started to draw some neighbourhood girls who came to the *pesantren* and learned informally at the rear terrace of Kiai Bisri's residence.

> [K]iai Bisri opened a special class for female attendees, something that had never happened in the pesantren world. The daughters of his neighbours were gathered to learn in his front yard to learn Islamic sciences. This rare action was inspected by his teacher Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary, who intentionally came to have a look at this special class. Kiai Bisri kept going with his experiment, although he did not receive specific approval from his teacher, who also did not prohibit him for this purpose. Before, he had never done anything until he obtained a consent from his respected teacher, such as in the case of his objection to joining the branch of Syarikat Islam in Mecca. His effort to open the class for female attendants has changed his personality as a result of his maturity...[35]

In 1923, the so-called Madrasah Salafiyah of *Pesantren* Denanyar was established, but it was only for male pupils. Then, in 1930, a *madrasah* was also established for female pupils. This means that although the informal class for female pupils started around 1919 in the residence of Kiai Bisri Syansury and Nyai Nurkhodijah, it was only in 1930 that the formal class for female pupils was opened. In the meantime, some people expressed their disagreement with the establishment of *pesantren* for girls[36] because they thought that women did not deserve to be educated.[37] The second *pesantren* for girls in Jombang was established in *Pesantren* Seblak Diwek in 1939. *Pesantren* Seblak itself was initially established in 1921 under the leadership of Kiai Maksum Ali, and upon his death was then taken over by his wife, Nyai Khoiriyah, in 1933. Afterwards, Kiai Machfudz Anwar and Nyai Abidah were the leaders of the *pesantren* from 1938. In 1939, the *pesantren* started to accept female pupils on the recommendation of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary. The initial place for those female pupils was the living-room of Nyai Abidah and Kiai Machfudz Anwar's residence. This is one of the situations in which public and private overlapped and is contingent; in which even within her private quarters, a *Nyai* like Nyai Abidah could also perform public roles.

In 1949, *Pesantren* Tambak Beras, one of the four major *pesantrens* in Jombang, also founded a *pesantren* for girls. This effort was undertaken by the son of Kiai Chasbullah, namely Kiai Abd. Fattah, and his wife Nyai Musyarrofah, who was also the daughter of Kiai Isri Syansury and Nyai Nurkhodijah. Kiai Abd. Fattah and Nyai Musyarrofah founded a *pesantren* for girls, namely Asrama Putri Selatan, in 1949; it later on became *Pesantren* Putri al-Fatimiyyah. Kiai Abd. Fattah has formally been the leader of the *pesantren* for girls al-Fatimiyyah and *Pesantren* Tambak Beras in general. Today, *Pesantren* Tambak Beras is well known for its *pesantrens* for girls. The largest one is that of al-Fatimiyyah. In 2003, it

was under the leadership of Kiai Nasir Abd. Fattah, and his wife Nyai Ummu Salma, with over 1000 female pupils from different areas of Java and Indonesia. Due to her age and health, Nyai Musyarrofah was no longer active in managing the *pesantren*, nevertheless she was still a well-respected *nyai* within it. Apart from al-Fatimiyyah, there were several other *pesantrens* for girls in the compounds of *Pesantren* Tambak Beras, such as al-Lathifiyyah, which is directed by Nyai Munjidah Wahab, who is also a chairperson of Muslimat NU of Jombang. Both al-Fatimiyyah and al-Lathifiyyah are named after the *nyais* from the *pesantrens*. There is also another notable *pesantren* for girls in Jombang, namely *Pesantren* Walisongo Cukir in Diwek. The *pesantren* started from Perguruan Putri Muallimat (female college of Muallimat). It is established in 1951, to open more access for women's education in the area.

Pesantren Seblak: Women's Educational Leadership

The main case of this study is *Pesantren* Seblak, which is located in Kwaron village of Diwek sub-district. The village lies on 199,750 hectares of land. Of its total population of 4,340, there are 1,808 men and 2,532 women. Most of the people in Kwaron are farmers, either owners of the fields or workers who rent the fields from the owners. In terms of educational institutions, Kwaron has both a primary school and an Islamic primary school, namely Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. However, for the secondary level, only Islamic schools are available. The majority of Kwaron's population is Muslim; they make up 4,338 of 4,340 of Kwaron's total population, with three mosques and sixteen *musholla* (small mosques) located in the area. Three *pesantrens* are located in the area, namely Salafiyah Seblak (Salafiyah al-Machfudz), Salafiyah Syafiiyah Seblak and Hudaya.[38] *Pesantren* Seblak is a special case in this regard since it has dominant female figures in its leadership. Until 1988, two *kiais*, namely Kiai Maksum Ali (the founding father) and Kiai Machfudz Anwar, and three *nyais*, namely Nyai Khoiriyah, Nyai Abidah and Nyai Jamilah, have all been recorded as the leaders of the *pesantren*. This fact confirms what one of the grandchildren of the *pesantren's* founding father said: "in Jombang, Pesantren Seblak would be the reference for the study on female leadership in *pesantrens*, compared to all other *pesantrens* in the area..."[39]

Pesantren *Seblak (1921-1988)*

Pesantren Seblak was founded in 1921 by Kiai Maksum Ali,[40] the son-in-law of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary. Kiai Maksum Ali married Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary's daughter, Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim. They had seven children,

but most of them died in infancy. Only two daughters survived, Abidah and Jamilah. The history of *Pesantren* Seblak began when Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary bought several hectares of land in Seblak from Pak Tiah, on which a small mosque was then built. It was also mentioned that Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary was offered several options to establish the *pesantren* in other locations, firstly Seblak, secondly Jombang town and thirdly at the border between Jombang and Kediri districts. Like *Pesantren* Tebuireng, this *pesantren* was also established in an area of theft and prostitution. The situation in Seblak changed over time due to the influence of the religious and moral teachings conveyed by the *pesantren*.

In 1926, Kiai Maksum Ali introduced a classical educational system, however, learning *kitab kuning*s still dominated the instructional program. In its development, the classical instructional system introduced by Kiai Maksum Ali became the seed of the formal educational institution or the schooling system at the *pesantren* itself. In the meantime, Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary also allowed some pupils of *Pesantren* Tebuireng to study in Seblak as part of the effort to ensure the *pesantren* had some initial pupils. Like other *pesantrens*, in its early history, *Pesantren* Seblak only had male pupils (*santri*s). When Kiai Maksum Ali passed away in 1933, the leadership of the *pesantren* was taken over by his wife, Nyai Khoiriyah.[41] In 1938, Nyai Khoiriyah left for Mecca because of her marriage to an Indonesian *ulama* who lived in Mecca. The *pesantren* was run by her son-in-law, Kiai Machfudz Anwar and her daughter, Nyai Abidah. In this period the *pesantren* began to accommodate female pupils. The wall and a small road inbetween segregated the location of the *pesantren* for boys and the *pesantren* for girls.

At that time (during the 1930s), no *pesantren* for girls was recorded in Tebuireng and the surrounding area. The only *pesantren* for girls in Jombang was the one located in *Pesantren* Denanyar. Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary sent his younger granddaughters to the *pesantren* for girls in Denanyar, which is about 15 km from Tebuireng. Those girls took *andong*[42] to get to Denanyar every day. They had to leave very early in the morning to get to Denanyar on time, and it took several hours to get there. It was tiring for those little girls. Feeling very sorry for his young granddaughters, Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary initiated the idea of establishing *pesantren* for girls in their local area. Nyai Abidah, his older granddaughter, was asked to become an instructor for the newly established *pesantren* for girls in Seblak. Nyai Abidah began her instruction for a small group of female pupils in her living room in Seblak. This informal group gradually developed into two classes, year one and year two. Commencing from Nyai Abidah's living room, the existence of the *pesantren* for girls began to be popular within the local community, and the number of female pupils steadily increased.

Meanwhile, during the later Dutch colonial period and Japanese occupation in 1942, followed by the return of the Dutch after Indonesian independence in 1945, like all other *pesantrens*, this *pesantren* was also suspected of being the base camp of *lasykar hizbullah* (the civilians who were trained to fight against the colonial military). At that time, a number of boys from the network of *pesantrens* in the area were actively involved in the struggle for Indonesian independence. Therefore, colonial armies regularly spied on the *pesantren*. In such a situation, to make the learning process secure and safe for the pupils, the *pesantren* for girls held their activities in the backyard of Nyai Abidah's residence. At one stage, the instruction was also transferred to an isolated place, which had its pedestrian access located at the local *sawah* (rice field).

Following the revolution and the withdrawal of the Dutch, the sociopolitical situation in Indonesia settled down in 1950, and *Pesantren* Seblak began to be resettled as well. In the same year, the *pesantren* for girls produced its first graduates. The existence of these female graduates created a new issue. Where could they pursue further education? As a response, the Muallimat Sekolah Guru Putri (Female Teacher Education College) was established in Seblak. Non-local pupils also attended this school; therefore, lodgings or accommodation for them was in high demand. Nyai Abidah's residence was set up to be the initial accommodation for those non-local female pupils. Her dining room was used as the bedroom for several female pupils in 1952. The first pupils who lived there were two girls who came from Bandang Ngoro Jombang. During the following years, more pupils came to live in the *pesantren*. Nyai Abidah's residence could not accommodate all of them, so the first dormitory for female pupils was built.

In 1957, Nyai Khoiriyah returned back to Indonesian after living for 19 years in Mecca. Upon her return, she resumed the leadership of *Pesantren* Seblak. Nyai Abidah and her husband moved to Jombang to manage the Pendidikan Guru Agama Putri Nahdlatul Ulama (NU Female Religious Teacher Training College) there. In 1969, Nyai Khoriyah's health began to deteriorate. One of her daughters, Nyai Jamilah who was married to Kiai Nur Aziz from *Pesantren* Singosari in Malang, returned to Seblak to assist her mother in managing the *pesantren*. In 1983, Nyai Khoiriyah passed away. The leadership of the *pesantren* was then taken over by her second daughter, Nyai Jamilah. During her leadership, the site of the *pesantren* campus was extended. As the daughter of Kiai Maksum Ali, she inherited some lands within the *pesantren* campus. Those lands were used to build several other buildings in the *pesantren* complex. In 1979, the *pesantren* was registered as a foundation, called Yayasan Khoiriyah Hasyim (Khoiriyah Hasyim Foundation). As the umbrella organisation, it was named after Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim.

In general, until 1988, the periods of *Pesantren* Seblak leadership are as follows:
- Kiai Maksum Ali (1921-1933)
- Nyai Khoiriyah (1933-1937)
- Kiai Machfudz and Nyai Abidah (1937-1957)
- Nyai Khoiriyah (1957-1969)
- Nyai Jamilah (1969-1988)

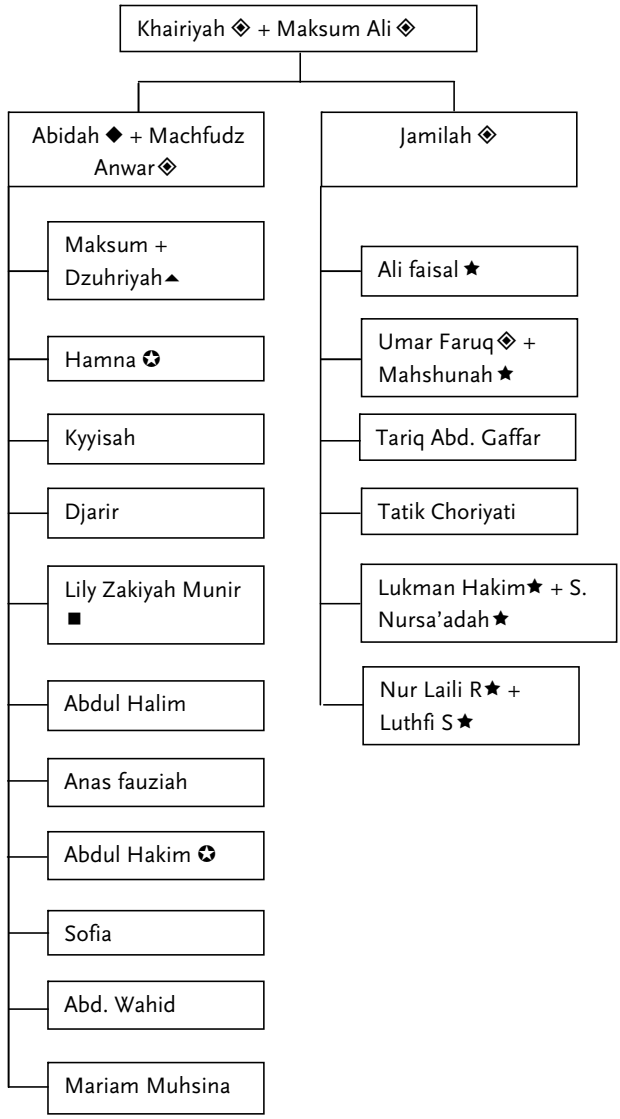
In 1988, Nyai Jamilah passed away, and this ended the central leadership.

Pesantren *Seblak (1988-2003)*

After Nyai Jamilah's period, the *pesantren* separated into two different leaderships and separate managements, namely *Pesantren* Salafiyah al-Machfudz, which went to Nyai Abidah's family, and *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafiiyah which went to Nyai Jamilah's family. The former was located at the original *pesantren* founded by Kiai Maksum Ali. This *pesantren* was directed by both Kiai Machfudz Anwar and his wife, Nyai Abidah. When Kiai Machfudz passed away, Nyai Abidah and her children managed the *pesantren*. Nyai Jamilah's sons and daughter managed another part of the *pesantren,* an extension established during Nyai Jamilah's leadership, known as *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafiiyah Seblak. *Pesantren* Salafiyah al-Machfudz provided no formal education; the pupils who lived in the *pesantren* used to have formal education outside the *pesantren* campus, either in Wahid Hasyim Islamic Secondary School, the university of Hasyim Asy'ary or Madrasah Muallimat (the education training college) of Cukir, which are located in the surrounding area.

Nyai Khoiriyah and Kiai Maksum Ali had two surviving daughters, Nyai Abidah and Nyai Jamilah. Both of them earned significant positions and contributed to the development of the *pesantren*. By the time I conducted any research in 2003, the *pesantren* was under the leadership of the second and third generation of the founding father. Since the first generation, the *pesantren* had already had a powerful female figure, Nyai Khoiriyah, followed by the second generation of Nyai Abidah and Nyai Jamilah and the third generation, Nyai Mahshunah. The third generation, apart from Nyai Mahshunah who played a siginificant role as *Nyai* in the period of her husband's leadership, also has some other powerful female figures. For instance, Lily Zakiyah Munir (Nyai Abidah's daughter) is actively engaged in searching for funding for *pesantren* development and comes forward with programs and ideas on *pesantren* issues through the NGO Cepdes (Centre for *Pesantren* and Democracy Studies) that she founded. Hamna (Nyai Abidah's daughter) was appointed as a leader of the *pesantren* for a short period of time,

Figure 3.4 *The tree of kinship in the leadership of Pesantren Seblak*



◈= former leaders of *Pesantren* Seblak (both Salafiyah Al-Macfudz and Syafiiyah)
◆ = current leader of *Pesantren* Salafiyah al-Machfudz
▲ = current member of structural leadership of *Pesantren* Salafiyah al-Machfudz.
★ = committee members of Khoiriyah Hasyim foundation (Salafiyah Syafiiyah)
✪ = former temporary leaders of *Pesantren* Salafiyah al Machfudz
■ = director of Cepdes (Centre for *Pesantren* and Democracy Studies)

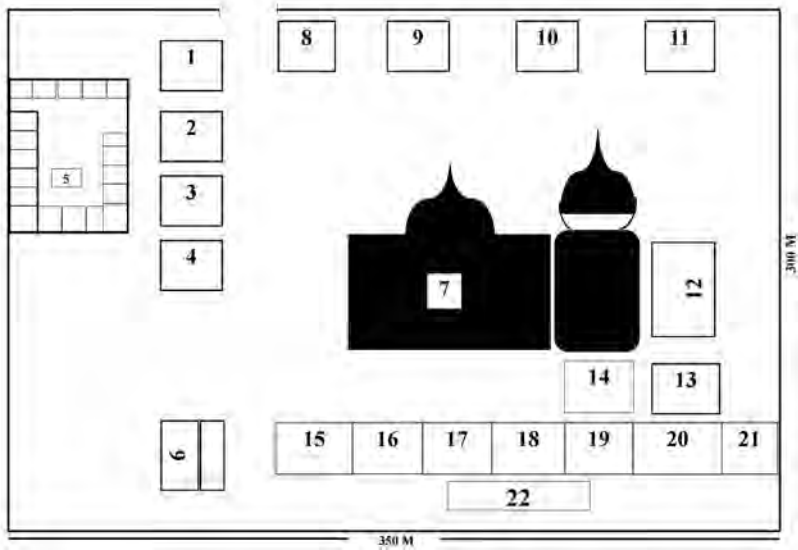
and Nyai Abidah's daughter-in-law, Dzuhriyah also contributed to the management of the *pesantren*, she held the position of *pelindung* of the *Pesantren* Salafiyah al-Machfudz. Another female figure is Nur Laili Rahmah (Nyai Jamilah's daughter), who leads the formal schooling in the *pesantren*. She is the principal of the Islamic secondary school (for girls) in the *pesantren*. Siti Nursa'adah (Nyai Jamilah's daughter-in-law) assists in her position as a kind of coordinator for the *pesantren* for girls as well; her husband is among the leaders in the current collective leadership of the *pesantren*. In terms of the structural leadership, this is the most recent organisational structure of Salafiyah Al-Machfudz (for the period 2004-2005):

Pelindung	Nyai Hj. Abidah (f)
	Nyai Dzuhriyah (f)
Pengasuh (directors)	Nyai Hj. Abidah (f)
	Eni Jamilah (f)
Penasehat (adviser)	H. Ahmad Halim, MA (m)
	K.H. Taufiqur Rahman (m)
	Dr. KH. Kayysiah (m)
	Djahrir Mahfudz (m)
Ketua (chairperson)	Sudarpo Said, S.Ag (m)
	Rondi Zein (m)
Sekretaris (secretary)	M. Nasirun (m)
Bendahara (treasurer)	Ali Masharuddin (m)
	Supriyadi (m)

Nyai Abidah was the main figure of the *pesantren* and she was assisted with the daily *pesantren* leadership and management by her daughter-in-law, Nyai Dzuhriyah. In 2003, Nyai Abidah's grandson married a graduate of *Pesantren* Denanyar, Eni Jamilah, who is in her early twenties. The presence of Eni Jamilah in the structure of the *pesantren* leadership is quite recent. As someone who married into the *kiais/nyais* family with a *pesantren* education background, she was perceived as capable enough for the position and acceptable because of her marital links. One of the pupils from *Pesantren* Seblak said that some religious duties, such as the leader of the communal prayers, had been delegated by Nyai Abidah to Eni Jamilah, something that she did by herself before her arrival.

Another part of *Pesantren* Seblak was directed by Nyai Jamilah's family. When Nyai Jamilah passed away, her son, Umar Faruq, well-known as Bapak Faruq, took over the leadership of the *pesantren*. Bapak Faruq's siblings were also involved in a collective leadership of the *pesantren* after their mother's period. The arrangement of the committee during Bapak Faruq's period was:

Figure 3.5 *Map of* Pesantren *Salafiyah al-Machfudz*



1. The residence of Nya Dzuhriyah
2. The office of Pondok putri
3. The residence of Nyai Abidah
4. The residence of Gus sholah
5. Pondok Putri
6. The residence of Gus Abdul
7. The mosque of Seblak
8. An-Anwar building
9. Al-Hikmah building
10. The place for *wudhu'* (ablution)
11. An-Nur building
12. The grave of Kiai Machfudz Anwar
13. The grave of Pesantren Seblak family
14. An-Najah building
15. The office of Pesantren putra
16. The office of SMAI
17. The classroom of SMAI
18. The computer lab
19. The classrooms
20. Library
21. The language lab

– *Pengasuh pesantren putri* (the coordinator of the *pesantren* for girls): Nyai Mahshunah (the wife of Umar Faruq), Nur Laili Rahmah, Siti Nursa'adah, BA.
– The coordinator of Madrasah Salafiyah Syafiiyah was Umar Faruq (Bapak Faruq), who was in charge of the educational institution unit under the foundation of Khoiriyah Hasyim, ranging from kindergarten, to Madrasah Diniyah and Aliyah.
– The coordinator of the orphanage house was H. Lukman Hakim (Bapak Lukman).

When Bapak Faruq passed away in 2003, the leadership of the *pesantren* passed on to his siblings, wife and in-laws. Bapak Faruq's wife, Nyai Mahsunah's has a significant leadership position as a '*Nyai*' for the female pupils. Nyai Jamilah's son and daughters, who reside locally, automatically took the managerial roles as well. They were involved in the instructional process, in line with their educational background. The recent arrangement of *yayasan* Khoiriyah Hasyim's committee after Bapak Faruq's period is:

Chairperson	Dr.H. Ali Faisal, Sp.A (m)
Co-chairperson	Dra Hj. Mahshunah (f)
	H. Asy'ary Sarbani, SH (m)
Secretary	H. Luqman Hakim, SH (m)
Co-secretary	H. Luthfi Sahal, Lc (m)
	Nur Hidayat, S.Ag (m)
Treasurer	Thariq Abdul Ghaffar (m)
Co-treasurer	Hj. Nur laili Rahmah, S.pd (f)

In the formal structure of the *pesantren* leadership, Ali Faisal is positioned as the chairperson, but in reality he does not reside locally in a *pesantren* complex nor maintain close contact with the pupils. Practically, the *pesantren* is managed collectively by Nyai Mahshunah, Lukman Hakim (and his wife) and Nur Laili Rahmah and her husband, Luthfi Sahal. Those people are directly engaged with the *pesantren* affairs on a day-to-day basis. They also reside locally and are able to fulfil their roles for the *pesantren* management and the pupils.

Pesantren Salafiyah Syafiiyah Seblak of Nyai Jamilah's family has the formal schooling system, which also separated the sexes, although these schools are located in the same complex. Male and female pupils are placed in separate classrooms. The *pesantren* also has an orphanage house, as part of its charitable contribution to society. The orphan pupils live separately from normal pupils. They are also exempt from the obligatory tuition fees. Outside the complex, there is a kindergarten, which was established in Nyai Khoiriyah's period to cater for the local children, and those little children are not lodged in the *pesantren* complex.

Centre for Pesantren *and Democracy Studies (Cepdes)*

The establishment of Cepdes also occurred within the framework of bringing the *pesantren* into a better stage of development. At the time I conducted the fieldwork in 2003, Cepdes had an office in the complex of *Pesantren* Salafiyah al-Machfudz. Cepdes was established by Kiai Machfudz Anwar and Nyai Abidah's daughter, Lily Zakiyah Munir[43] in 2002. Talking about the initial concept of Cepdes, Lily compared its basic idea of '*Islam transformative*' to '*Islam Emansipatoris*' of P3M (*Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat*, the Centre for the *pesantren* and Community Development).

At the time P3M had a program called "*Islam Emansipatoris*", Emancipatory Islam, which is directed towards deconstructing the religious interpretations, based on realistic experience, and this is close to Cepdes's program of what we called "Islam Transformative". Transformative Islam began from the method of understanding the religion, Quran and *hadits*, not in a normative way but based on reality, through the discussions called *bahsul masail*.[44]

As an organisation, Cepdes outlined several programs, mostly targetting *pesantrens* and their community. Some of Cepdes programs were:

1 Strengthening the capacity of the community.
   - providing English courses for both pupils and staff
   - developing *budaya baca* (a culture of reading) among the pupils and society.
2 Developing democracy and civil society
   - Developing visionary leadership for leaders within the framework of local autonomy.
   - Gender justice and equality.
   - Establishing a school of politics for women.
3 Workshops and Research
   - *Bahsul Masail* under the topic of Political Rights of Muslim women.
   - Publishing a bulletin on the topic of transformative Islam.

Apparently, gender issues is one of the priorities in Cepdes programs. This fact cannot be separated from the figure of Lily Zakiyah Munir herself, who is also known as an expert on gender and Islam. She has been invited to speak on this topic in different national as well as international seminars, conferences and workshops. Her article entitled, "He is your garment and you are his... (sic): religious precepts, interpretations, and power relations in marital sexuality among Javanese Muslim women", was published by *Sojourn* (Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia), October 2002, and "Islam, Gender and Equal Rights for Women", was published by Indonesian English newspaper the *Jakarta Post*, Tuesday, December 10, 2002. In addition, she has also

presented several papers on this topic for both national and international conferences. When I interviewed her in July 2003, she had just come back from a conference in Chile, namely "Dialogos Sur-Sur, Planning the South-South Dialogue between Indonesia and the Andean Region and Southern Cone: Religion, Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights", June 23-27, 2003, in Santiago. In this conference, she presented her topic of gender and Islam by stressing the Islamic perspectives of *maslahat* or *maqasid al-shari'a* (the aims of the *sharia*). In the interview, Lily also stated that she was to conduct a workshop on Muslim women and political participation in the perspectives of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). As an organisation which is concerned with Islam and contemporary issues, Cepdes has a particular program to discuss different issues of contemporary Islam within a *pesantren* tradition, namely *bahsul masail*.[45]

Lily Zakiyah Munir was assisted by a committee.[46] As listed above, the main idea of Cepdes was to promote the idea of 'transformative Islam' through a variety of programs and projects. Obviously, some people who work for Cepdes have *pesantren* backgrounds. It seems that the issues they try to promote go far beyond just *pesantren* issues *per se*. However, the *pesantren* is still viewed as a significant agent. Cepdes aims to develop the *pesantren* as the centre for democracy and civil society. It published a bulletin, namely *al-Hanif*, with the motto of "*menjembantani tradisi dan modernitas*" (to bridge between tradition and modernity). Cepdes is aware of the essence of tradition in its structure, which is represented by the *pesantren* institution, and modernity represented by the programs on socialising democracy and other contemporary socio-political issues of democracy, gender, civil society and so forth.

I made several visits to the Cepdes office during my fieldwork in Jombang, which was located within the compound of *Pesantren* Salafiyah al-Machfudz. I read some literature from the Cepdes library. The collections consisted of books and publications in Indonesian, Arabic and English. The library has a significant number of English books on the contemporary issues of democracy, civil society and gender discourse. The books on women and Islam include *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Quran,* by Asma Barlas, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society,* by Fatima Mernissi, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate,* by Laila Ahmed. The library also has collections of local and national newspapers, magazines on women, health and other issues, also a fiction section.

Within the framework of its program, Cepdes arranged some workshops or seminars, for instance there was a workshop on the topic of "*Pesantren*, Terrorism and Radicalism" on October 16, 2003. The speakers came from local, national as well as international backgrounds. This

activity showed that Cepdes has also been recognised by national and international participants. It was not the first time that Cepdes invited international speakers to its workshop. On February 14-15, 2003, Cepdes held a workshop on 'visionary leadership' for the village leaders, which was attended by the counsellor of public affairs from the American embassy and a Japanese researcher, Dr. Yasuko Kobayashi, who shared his ideas on democracy in Japan. The existence of Cepdes was also sponsored by the Tifa Foundation, the Ford Foundation, UNDP, Emory University, Atlanta, and the public affairs section of the American embassy in Jakarta. Currently, Cepdes has several offices, not only in Jombang but also in Jakarta. The original office located within the complex of *Pesantren* Seblak was also transferred to a proper location of its own in Jombang.

The case of Cepdes signifies another model of women's engagement in serving the *pesantren* and the community. Lily Zakiyah Munir as a female immediate family member of the *kiai* played a role in informal *pesantren* affairs through her NGO. She was not positioned in the formal structure of the *pesantren* leadership like her mother, nevertheless her efforts had a significant impact on the development of the *pesantren* itself. In the interview, Nyai Abidah also recognised that her daughter, Lily Zakiyah Munir, has a role in sharing ideas and in seeking financial assistance for the development of the *pesantren*. The next chapter will touch specifically upon the public roles of *Nyai* in the *pesantren* and community-related matters.

4 Nyais of Jombang *Pesantrens*

Public Roles and Agency[1]

Biographical Sketch of the *Nyais*

From the main case study of *Pesantren* Seblak, I have chosen three *nyais* from three different generations; starting with Nyai Khoiriyah (the first generation), Nyai Abidah (the second generation) and Nyai Mahshunah (the third generation). Nyai Khoiriyah and her husband founded the *pesantren*. Nyai Abidah is Nyai Khoiriyah's daughter, while Nyai Mahshunah came from *Pesantren* Darul Ulum and married the grandson of Nyai Khoiriyah and moved to *Pesantren* Seblak. These facts suggest that *nyais*, either in their *pesantren* of origin or their 'adopted *pesantren*', have similar opportunities to be as influential as their male counterparts, particularly if they have leadership skills, management abilities and relevant religious knowledge.

Nyai Khoiriyah

Nyai Khoiriyah was born in 1906. She was the second child from the marriage of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary to Nyai Nafiqah. Both her parents were believed to be the descendants of a sixteenth-century Javanese king, namely Brawijaya.[2] She grew up in a period when there was no extensive public education, either religious or secular, available for women, despite some limited basic schools that were founded by the Dutch as part of their ethical policy[3] for the native people, or some limited educational access in Western Dutch education that was also offered to the children of upper-class, aristocratic Javanese background, including the daughters.[4] Those Dutch schools were not very popular and were not 'accepted' among the *pesantren* or *santri* community. This is due to *pesantren* antipathy to the Dutch colonial powers in Indonesia. Since there was no *pesantren* education for girls, then some *kiai*s taught their daughters at home at that time.[5]

Little Khoiriyah had a private education on Islamic sciences from her father, Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary. The *pesantren* world has a principle under which women and men should not intermingle; Khoiriyah was educated by her father using this principle. Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary did not

place his daughter in his *halaqah* (a group of students which resembles a class) or allow her to mix with his male students. In his short article on Nyai Khoiriyah, Zuhdy mentioned that Nyai Khoiriyah followed the lessons from her father where she sat behind a curtain so that she did not intermingle with her male counterparts.[6] Her destiny to be the daughter of an elite religious leader bestowed on her some particular privileges, including the opportunity to be educated in specific knowledge of Islamic sciences, knowledge which was generally unavailable for women in her time.

As a member of the core family of the *kiai*, she was also supposed to follow the practice of endogamous marriage to maintain the strong network of the *pesantren*, extending as well as sustaining the *pesantren* tradition. When she was about thirteen years old, she was married to a learned student of her father, Maksum Ali from the family of *Pesantren* Maskunambang Gresik.[7] After the marriage, her father, Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary, suggested that the couple establish a new *pesantren*. It is quite common for a descendant of a *kiai* to either lead the existing *pesantren* or establish a 'new' *pesantren*. As a result, *Pesantren* Seblak was founded in 1921, located about 200 metres from her father's *Pesantren* Tebuireng. At the very beginning, all the pupils were male, some of them were indeed the pupils of *Pesantren* Tebuireng. Kiai Maksum Ali was recorded as the first leader of *Pesantren* Seblak. When Kiai Maksum Ali passed away in 1933, Nyai Khoiriyah took over the leadership of the *pesantren*.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the early twentieth century was when several schools were founded, including ones for girls. This phenomenon occurred not only in Indonesia, but also in Europe as education for the masses became more prevalent. In Indonesia women began entering the public schooling either as pupils, teacher, leader, or even founders of those girls schools, as in the case of Rahmah al-Yunusiyyah for Diniyah Putri school, Nyai Ahmad Dahlan for Muallimat school, and Nyai Nurkhodijah for *pesantren* for girls of Denanyar. What made Nyai Khoiriyah's engagement in the leadership of the *pesantren* different was that she was the leader of a *pesantren* that also had male pupils. She was the leader over the staff, including the male staff of the *pesantren*.[8]

Nyai Khoriyah assumed the leadership of the *pesantren* for approximately five years, until 1938. As a consequence of her second marriage to an Indonesian *ulama*, who lived in Mecca, Kiai Muhaimin[9], Nyai Khoriyah left for Mecca. Travelling to Mecca was commonly undertaken by santri and devout members of the Muslim community from the archipelago. The main aim for their journey to Mecca was to make a pilgrimage, but some also stayed for educational purposes.[10] This practice continued until the early twentieth century.[11]

The chance to live in Mecca and to learn and study there is a dream of the majority of *pesantren* people in the archipelago, as the knowledge gained gives them more religious credibility. Mecca is considered the '*sumber ngelmu*' (the source of knowledge).[12] If the journey to Mecca was understood by the *santri* community as a place for making a pilgrimage, Mecca was also the centre for creating a well-versed and learned *ulama*. However, there was no record of women scholars in Mecca among the Archipelago pilgrim network from the seventeenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century. Similarly, there is almost no data or record of a woman from *pesantren* background who spent any amount of time in a Mecca *halaqah* and became a learned *ulama* upon her return to the Archipelago. It was clear that some women from *pesantren* background or *kiai*'s family travelled to Mecca; most of them only for the purpose of the pilgrimage, or to accompany their husbands as in the case of the first wife of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary from *Pesantren* Siwalan Panji Sidoarjo, or Nyai Nurkhodijah, who made a pilgrimage to Mecca with her brother before she married Kiai Bisri Syansury. In Khoiriyah's case, however, as someone who had already been equipped to a particular degree in Islamic scholarship from the opportunity to learn from her father, it seemed that she also found the opportunity to learn eagerly while staying in Mecca. Nyai Khoiriyah lived for nineteen years in Mecca from 1938-1957. There is no documentation on how Nyai Khoiriyah studied in Mecca. Did she participate in the *halaqah* (Islamic learning circle) which was held in al-Haram Mosque of Mecca together with her male counterparts? Or did she learn in one of the *halaqah*s with her female counterparts in Mecca, since the segregation of men and women was strictly applied? Her adopted son said in an interview: "It was clear that *Ibu* (Nyai Khoiriyah) was also learning in Mecca, but technically how – whether she attended *halaqah* with other male attendants or not – I have no idea.'[13]

Moreover, all my interviewees believed that Nyai Khoiriyah pioneered the establishment of a school for girls in Mecca, namely Madrasah Banat. They also believed this school was one of the first girls' schools in Mecca. The school is related to the history of a school for young men in Mecca. In 1927, Sayid Muchsin Musana from Palembang founded Madrasah Darul Ulum in Mecca. Some people from the archipelago who lived in Mecca objected to Sayid Muchsin Musana, so the leadership of the school was passed on to Syeikh Yasin al-Fadany. After Syeikh Yasin's period, the director of the *madrasah* was Kiai Muhaimin (Nyai Khoiriyah's husband). There had been discussions about establishing a school for girls since the early years of Madrasah Darul Ulum, but it was not until 1942 that Nyai Khoiriyah actually opened one. It was supported by Syeikh Yasin al-Fadany himself. Structurally, the Madrasah Banat was part of the Madrasah Darul Ulum, but it existed

separately to provide Islamic education to girls. To confirm Nyai Khoiriyah's engagement in the education and learning/instruction in Mecca, her adopted son said, "Nyai Khoiriyah gave me a watch, and it was a gift from the parents after the graduation of their children".[14] Nevertheless, in this study, I have not had the capacity to trace back to her period in Mecca or find out how the history in Mecca recorded her contribution to the establishment of the Madrasah Banat. In this regard, my focus is more on how a woman is recognised as a pioneer and was seen as being capable of a significant contribution in the public space by her people within a male-dominated society.

In 1957, Nyai Khoiriyah returned to Indonesia and began to be involved in a wider range of public religious roles. She returned to Indonesia first of all because her husband, Kiai Muhaimin, passed away at the end of 1956. Another reason was the suggestion of Sukarno, the first Indonesian president, whom she met in Mecca; he invited her to return to Indonesia to contribute to the development of Indonesia. Within the Javanese and *pesantren* tradition, there was a strong tendency to give more respect to an *ulama* who had just returned from Mecca and who was seen to be able to bestow a *barakah* (a bounty of grace) on those who came to study. Having 'graduated' from Mecca, as the centre of Islamic learning, gave an *ulama* particular religious status and authority. According to Aboebakar,[15] a religious teacher who did not live and learn in Mecca was just like a teacher who did not have a certificate, although s/he might have a big *pesantren* and hundreds of students. The *ulama* would be visited by a number of local people for the *barakah*, and the parents would be highly motivated to send their children to learn from the *ulama*.

Nyai Khoiriyah: an Ulama Perempuan (Female Ulama)

Regardless of how she studied, the fact is that upon her return to Indonesia, her ability in Islamic sciences was comparable to other well-known [male] *ulama*s. Aboebakar in his description of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary's family, described Khoiriyah as "... *ulama wanita yang tidak alang kepalang mendalam ilmunya tentang Islam*" (a female *ulama* with highly outstanding capabilities in Islamic learning).[16] As a daughter of the celebrated *ulama*, it seems that Khoiriyah also inherited the capacity to attain the high level of her father's knowledge in the Islamic sciences. In this regard, Dhofier made a pertinent comment, saying that "... [S]ome *kiai*s taught their daughter themselves on the high level of Islamic classical text-books. Nyai Khoiriyah, the daughter of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary, for instance, had a very deep understanding of the branches of Islamic sciences..."[17]

The level of Khoiriyah's understanding of the different branches of Islamic sciences was outstanding. She mastered a number of *kitab kuning*s, including the advanced level of those Islamic classical textbooks.[18] Several religious figures of other *pesantrens* in Jombang also confirmed her outstanding capacity in the Islamic sciences. During my interview with him, Kiai Yusuf Hasyim, the director of *Pesantren* Tebuireng, also recognized Nyai Khoiriyah's intellectual capacity in the Islamic sciences. He attributed the title '*kiai putri*' (female *kiai*) to Nyai Khoiriyah.[19] Another leader of the local *pesantren* in the area confirmed Nyai Khoiriyah's capability. One of her students who used to accompany her in her activities also said that Nyai Khoiriyah was brave enough to express her opinion even if it opposed those of the men in a *bahsul masail* attended by the well-known *kiai* or *ulama*: "Who dares to oppose the opinions of the *kiai sepuh* [senior *kiai*] in *bahsul masail*? But Mbah Khoiriyah was brave enough to do that. She referred to the classical *kitab kuning* to support her opinion, having equal mastery of the *kitab kuning* as those *kiai* did."[20] *Ulama*s in Islam also have a religious authority for generating *fatwa*s. For the NU community, the *fatwa* is a product of a *bahsul masail* or meeting of learned religious leaders/*ulama*s. As mentioned above, Nyai Khoiriyah was one of the participants in the *bahsul masail* among the *ulama*s/*kiai*s of Jombang.

A staff member who worked during Nyai Khoiriyah's leadership of *Pesantren* Salafiyah Seblak said, "Nyai Khoiriyah tested some male teachers on their fluency in reciting the Qur'an to determine if they were eligible to be the *imam* of the communal prayers".[21] One of her pupils told me, "I still remember when Mbah Khoiriyah examined the recitation of *sura al-Fatihah*. Several male teachers of Pesantren Salafiyah Seblak were tested, but only a few of them passed this examination".[22] This fact is quite interesting, considering that the mainstream opinion in the *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) states that a woman is not allowed to be an *imam* for the communal prayer if there are any male participants. From the *fiqh* mainstream point of view, Nyai Khoiriyah was not eligible to be an *imam* for the Friday communal prayers, for instance, but the male staff members or teachers of her *pesantren* were eligible. Nevertheless, it was Nyai Khoiriyah who examined the staff of the *Pesantren* Seblak regarding their qualifications for being an *imam* for those communal prayers. In Nyai Khoiriyah's case, it is almost impossible to maintain that the label of *ulama* is only exclusively attached to male scholars. Evidently, some women earned the title as well. All of the above data strongly supports the recognition of her capacity as an *ulama,* regardless of the fact that the mainstream within Muslim communities still presumes that an *ulama* is a male scholar. Sayyid Marsot states in his book, *Men and Women in Eighteenth Century Egypt*, that an *ulama* is basically a learned man who interprets the Quranic verses and

other Islamic teachings. There were some women who were learned, but they "do not acquire the status and degree of authority of an *alim* [male *ulama*]".[23] In the Indonesian context, the term *ulama perempuan* has been used since 1980 in the journal of *Mimbar Ulama* published by *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesian Ulama Council). Nevertheless, the term *ulama* in the *Mimbar Ulama* was 'reduced' to the category of female religious preacher (*muballighah*) *per se*.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there was no written publication about her, apart from an unpublished bachelor's thesis from the Institut Agama Islam Negeri (The State Institute for Islamic Studies) Surabaya, plus a brief article written by her adopted son published in *Pesantren* Tebuireng's magazine. This was despite the fact that she was such a highly qualified female religious figure as an *ulama*, notably within the NU circle and the *pesantren* community. Even the book entitled *Ulama Perempuan Indonesia* (Indonesian Women Ulama) edited by Jajat Burhanuddin and published by Pustaka Gramedia Utama in 2002, a compilation of several biographical stories of prominent Indonesian female figures within the Islamic context, did not include her in its chapters, although she properly deserved the title of *ulama* herself. In this regard, Sinta Nuriyah, the director of the NGO PUAN Amal Hayati, criticized the standards used to determine the degree of '*keulamaan*', 'ulama-ness', as she believed there are some female figures who deserve the title of *ulama* but were excluded from the book, whilst some figures with lesser qualifications were included in the book. Nuriyah said: "As far as I know, the real female *ulama* is Mbah Khoiriyah from Seblak, Mas Rahman's[24] auntie."[25]

In this regard, Azyumardi Azra has commented on the scarce resources that have been written on *ulama*s in biographical dictionaries (*tarajim*), particularly on female *ulama*s, both in Islamic societies in general and in the Indonesian Muslim community in particular. This is quite true; not only has no biographical dictionary on Indonesian female *ulama* been written, there is also a tendency among the community that labelling women with the title of *ulama* is quite uncommon. As Azra cited: ... [O]nce again, a lot of things that we do not know yet on Indonesian female *ulama*. And there are also a number of Indonesian female *ulama*s who are not uncovered yet."[26] There may well be a number of women who deserve to be attributed as *ulama*, including Nyai Khoiriyah.

Nyai Khoiriyah's Educational Leadership

Among the *pesantren* leadership, she was the *pengasuh* (leader). The position as a *pesantren* leader is a tribute to her charisma, and invites respect from others. She had several male staff members and teachers under her leadership. During her leadership period, she initiated

specific educational programs such as the establishment of a kindergarten for the local people. With regard to her position as a leader of *Pesantren* Seblak, she assumed the position in two different periods. The first period commenced in 1933 when her husband passed away, and lasted until 1938 when she left for Mecca, and this was the period before independence in Indonesia. The second period began in 1957 when she returned from Mecca, and lasted until late 1968, when she decided to retire from her role as *pesantren* leader; this was during the Sukarno period. In the first period of her leadership, the *pesantren* only had male students, whereas during the latter period of her leadership some female students were admitted to the *pesantren*, a tendency that started in 1939 under her daughter and son-in-law's leadership. Nyai Khoiriyah only taught the female students of the *pesantren*. One of the graduates of *Pesantren* Seblak under Nyai Khoiriyah's leadership said that the alumni of *Pesantren* Seblak "*banyak yang menjadi 'orang"* which meant that a lot of them became significant figures. This is due to Nyai Khoiriyah's strong effort in developing and making significant improvements within the *pesantren*. She was known as someone who was disciplined, learned and religious.

In the period during which she became the leader of the *pesantren*, it was still quite rare to have a female in the top educational leadership position, let alone for a *pesantren* that had male pupils. However, in the second period of her leadership after Independence in 1945, the revolution era and guided democracy period of the 1950s, some women were given access to public roles and positions including educational leadership. Nevertheless, within the *pesantren* tradition, a priority for men to take over the *pesantren* leadership still reigned until the end of the twentieth century. Therefore, putting her leadership within the context of the *pesantren* tradition, her engagement as academic manager of the *pesantren* both in the first and in the second period is quite important in indicating her significant public roles in the religious educational leadership of the *pesantren* institution.

Nyai Khoiriyah: Socio-Religious Activities

As part of the NU community, Nyai Khoiriyah also participated in the structural leadership of the NU organisation, particularly in the Muslimat NU organisation. She was appointed twice (from 1959-1962 and 1967-1979) as the adviser for the national level of the Muslimat NU organization. This position is similar to that of the *Badan Syuriah* PBNU (Supreme Religious Council of Nahdlatul Ulama) that consisted of senior *kiai*s. Nyai Khoiriyah[27] herself was also appointed as a member of that *Badan Syuriah* PBNU[28] during the 1960s, which was dominated by senior *kiai*s. No other woman was appointed as member of *Badan Syuriah* PBNU again within the next generation of NU women,

nor indeed in the twentieth century. Alternatively through the women's wing organisations, some female *pesantren* figures obtained access to national political positions, including parliamentary seats. It seems that Nyai Khoriyah decided not to be engaged in such political roles and positions, and concentrated primarily on the religious and educational fields.

For the local people, Nyai Khoiriyah was an active figure. She was invited to a great number of local *majelis taklims* (Islamic learning councils). One of her granddaughters said: "Mbah Khoiriyah had a special *becak* (pedicab) and a special chauffeur to take her to different places where she was invited to give a speech."[29] One of her students at *Pesantren* Seblak said:

> Mbah Khoiriyah was a smart, disciplined and active woman. Every Friday, she had several socio-religious activities and was invited to the *majelis taklim*. Sometimes she was invited to five different *majelis taklim* at the same time. When this happened, she would go to one *majelis taklim* and direct her students to go to the others. All of those students had a *becak* [pedicab] prepared by Mbah Khoiriyah for their transportation, should this occur.[30]

Apart from her activities to deliver sermons in several religious gathering or *majelis taklim*, she also wrote her thoughts and published her works. Within the years in which oral tradition was more recognized, this was not common among NU leaders, let alone a woman. One of her articles was on the understanding of Islamic schools (*mazhab*) and tolerance.[31]

The strong legitimacy that buttressed her in that position was not only her blood relationship to the figure of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary, it was also supported by her own potential and capacities. Not all of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary's daughters demonstrated similar achievements. Her capacity in understanding the Islamic sciences and the fact that she resided in Mecca as the centre of Islamic learning for so many years had already given her a strong basis for respect by the community for her public roles. The 'blue-blood legitimacy' as a member of a *kiai*'s kinship network in which *nyais* achieve specific ascribed 'power'[32] provided significant privileges. However, these privileges are not adequate for negotiating significant public roles or for making their existence in the public sphere more recognisable if not accompanied by relevant capabilities. She further 'negotiated' the possibility for public roles apart from the ascribed public access inherent in the process of *ibuism* and *priyayization*. Such a pattern is also to be found in other *nyai* stories in the next generation of *Pesantren* Seblak and other *pesantrens* as well.

Nyai Abidah (Bu Abidah)

Nyai Abidah was born in 1924. She was the first surviving daughter of Nyai Khoiriyah from her marriage to Kiai Maksum Ali. Like her mother, Nyai Abidah was also an active female figure. One of my informants said she resembles '*Ibu Kartini dari Jombang*' (Ms. Kartini from Jombang). Nyai Abidah was also engaged intensively in the project of providing educational opportunities for girls in *pesantrens* and the NU circle in Jombang, particularly through her involvement in the early establishment of *pesantren* for girls in Seblak. Her significant contribution in the early history of Pendidikan Guru Agama NU Putri (PGA NU Putri, NU Female Religious Teacher Training College) in Jombang and her leadership of *Pesantren* Seblak added to her reputation. In her further public roles, as a member of parliament and a judge in Jombang's religious court, she also represented the idea of women's emancipation. Her seniority among other *nyais* in the area has made her a respected person within the *pesantren* and beyond.

Young Abidah attended no formal schooling. She learned from her mother (Nyai Khoiriyah), grandfather (Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary) and her uncle (Wahid Hasyim). All of them were among the celebrated and learned religious figures from the *pesantren* and NU community. Wahid Hasyim invited her to his residence to accompany his wife, Nyai Solichah, who was in the same situation; trying to learn the Arabic script. Nyai Abidah was chosen to accompany Solichah (from *Pesantren* Denanyar), who had just become a member of the Tebuireng family after her marriage to Wahid Hasyim. Wahid Hasyim was one of Nyai Abidah's masters and a person who encouraged her and provided her with access to teach the girl students in *Pesantren* Seblak and in the Female Religious Teacher Training College in Jombang.

Nyai Abidah as Manager and Educational Leader

In Abidah's time, there were some schools and informal *pesantren* education programs available for women, particularly in *Pesantren* Denanyar, although Nyai Abidah was not educated there. Nevertheless, according to Nyai Abidah, there was some opposition towards the idea of providing education for women. She said: "[T]here were still some people who had a conservative view of the idea of education for women. To them, "women are not allowed to learn, it is *haram* [religiously forbidden]". Her mother expected her to have a better education in order to continue her dreams of serving the *pesantren* and community.[33] "Mbah Khoiriyah [Nyai Khoiriyah] said, it is useless to have children if we cannot derive a benefit from them. If you don't believe me that women should also pursue education, come and ask Mbah Hasyim [Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary] about it".[34] According to Nyai Abidah, her mother

placed a responsibility on her shoulders to take care of *pesantren* affairs. "You are my eldest daughter,"[35] Nyai Khoiriyah said to Nyai Abidah, reminding her of the continual [inherited] responsibility for *pesantren* leadership. The above statement of Nyai Khoiriyah conveys a very clear message, that as a daughter of a *pesantren* leader, she had to be prepared to take over the duties of managing and developing the *pesantren*. Her position as a member of a *kiai* family came inherently with the duty as well. She herself was also a wife of a *kiai*, as the result of endogamous marriage. In fulfilling her duty as the first female instructor for the female students of *Pesantren* Seblak, Nyai Abidah realised that she was fortunate to have a husband like Kiai Machfudz Anwar.[36] He helped her in preparing the lessons for her students. He was a graduate of *Pesantren* Tebuireng and was one of the instructors there, too. He was learned in the Islamic sciences, and he had also mastered a variety of Islamic knowledge, particularly the *ilm al-falaq* sort of Islamic astronomy to identify the start and the end of Ramadan and the coming of *Idul Fitri*. Nyai Abidah claimed she couldn't write in the Arabic script and was only literate in the Malay script. Most lessons in the *pesantren* were written in the Arabic script.

> "I said to my husband, '*Bapak,* could you please help me? After breakfast, before you go out to teach in Pesantren Tebuireng, could you please write something on the blackboard for me?' 'What should I write?' Kiai Machfudz asked me. 'Please write what I would like to teach for today'. "[37]

This happened in her first experience of being an instructor for the female students in *Pesantren* Seblak. Nyai Abidah mentions that her husband prepared three written blackboards for her before conducting her instructional duties. She simply changed from one to another written blackboard for each session of her instruction. Apart from her husband, Nyai Abidah also learned from her uncle, Wahid Hasyim. Wahid Hasyim encouraged her to teach the female students in *Pesantren* Salafiyah Seblak and in the Pendidikan Guru Agama (PGA, Islamic Teacher Training College) at Jombang. The first cohort of girl students of *Pesantren* Salafiyah Seblak was far bigger than predicted. A great number of girls from different ages turned up at the *pesantren* to learn. Nyai Abidah had to consult with Wahid Hasyim to work out how and what should be taught. The PGA in Jombang was also part of Wahid Hasyim's efforts to establish a public school for girls in the area. Once again, Nyai Abidah was his choice to manage the school. The PGA prepared the teachers for the elementary and secondary levels of Islamic schools. Nyai Abidah said, "To teach the PGA students is more difficult, so I asked Pak Wahid what I should do. Pak Wahid said, 'You have to

teach, this is *wajib* [obligatory]'."[38] Nyai Abidah was a person who was entrusted by Wahid Hasyim to support his idea of expanding formal education for women.

In her instructional duties afterwards, Nyai Abidah not only taught the female students *per se*, she was an instructor for male students as well, even though it was a *pesantren* tradition that a woman was not allowed to teach male students/classes. One student said, "I attended a class taught by Nyai Abidah on Islamic theology, using *kitab Jawahir al-Kalamiyah* as a text. The students were both male and female."[39] During my fieldwork (1989-2003), I discovered that very few *nyai* ever instructed classes of male students; the majority exclusively teach female pupils.

Apart from her instructional duties, she was also co-leader of the *pesantren* with her husband, Kiai Machfudz Anwar. Several years after Nyai Khoiriyah passed away in 1982, Nyai Abidah and her husband, returned to manage *Pesantren* Seblak in a joint leadership until Kiai Machfudz Anwar passed away in 1989; since then Nyai Abidah has been the sole director of the *pesantren*. During my research in Jombang, apart from Nyai Abidah there were two other children of Nyai Abidah and Kiai Machfudz Anwar who assumed the leadership of the *pesantren* temporarily, namely Hamnah and Abdul Hakim. Nevertheless, in reality, within the period of 1989-2003, Nyai Abidah primarily assumed the leadership of the *pesantren*. In 2000-2001, she withdrew from teaching the students in the *pesantren* and also from her instructional roles in the *majelis taklim* for local women, but she was still in the position as a leader of the *pesantren* two years later. Among other *nyai* in the area, Nyai Abidah is known as *nyai sepuh*, which literally means an elderly *nyai*. In the NU community the *kiai* and *nyai sepuh* are more respected because their age indicates knowledge, maturity, wisdom and experience. Armed with these qualities, Nyai Abidah is regarded with the utmost respect by the *pesantren* and local society.

Nyai Abidah: Public Positions beyond Pesantren *Boundaries*

Thanks to her involvement in the Muslimat NU organisation that was established in 1946, Nyai Abidah had the opportunity to be engaged in significant political activities, particularly as a member of the early national parliament, namely *Konstituante*, which was founded as a result of the general election in 1955.

The opportunity for Nyai Abidah to participate in public socio-political roles stems from the micro-culture of the family, "... although a woman is active, if she is not supported by her husband it doesn't work."[40] Lily Zakiyah Munir also described how her father voluntarily offered to look after their children when Nyai Abidah felt reluctant to be in that position because she had several little children.

> When my mother became a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1959, her children were very young. My mother had eleven children with two- or three-year intervals between them. Regarding her status as a member of DPRD and the Constituent Assembly, she wanted to say that her children were very young, but then her husband Pak Kiai Machfudz Anwar said, 'Just leave the children with me, why can't you trust that I am also able to look after them?'[41]

At this stage as well, her career was not exclusively dealing with *pesantren* matters, for she was much more heavily engaged in political activities. Being a mother of eleven children with several public appointments, it did not seem to be easy for her to keep a balance between her domestic and public duties. According to her daughter, Lily Zakiyah Munir, Nyai Abidah dutifully represented the presence of Muslim women in the public space.

> Nyai Abidah was actively involved in Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama organisation. She was also a member of the local House of Representatives in Jombang in 1951. I just want to say, the stereotype that Muslim women are merely attached to the domestic sphere is not completely correct. I was a baby at that time, during which time my mother would ... travel the eight kilometres from Seblak to Jombang. If there was a meeting, she still took me with her, because there was no baby formula at that time. She would take me to *ibu rodho'*, a wet nurse, and I was breastfed there. This was part of her struggle.[42]

Moreover, she entered a judicial or legal system when she was appointed as the religious judge at the *pengadilan agama* (religious court) of Jombang in two different periods; from 1960-1964 and 1965-1968. In fact, within the Islamic jurisprudence discourse, it is still debatable whether a woman is allowed to be a judge or not, and this discourse also took place in the *pesantren* world. The fact that Indonesia has some female religious judges does not mean that all Muslim society can easily accept the existence of female religious judges. To some extent the realities and the discourse are incompatible. Although the Minister of Religious Affairs from the NU and a *pesantren* background created a policy that made it possible for women to attend the Sekolah Hakim Agama Negeri (National Religious Law School), some discourses within the NU and *pesantren* communities are still hesitant about the appropriateness of female religious judges, and whether their stand can be legitimated from the Islamic point of view. One of the stories that I traced in this regard is from the *bahsul masail*[43] column *Tebuireng*

Magazine in 1986, relating to the question "Is it allowed for a woman to be a religious judge?" The answer was that only one out of four major Sunni Islamic schools allowed for the possibility of female judges in Islamic jurisprudence. In the concluding remark, it is mentioned that the reason for supporting this argument is that a woman lacks rationality (*naqis al-aql*). Nyai Abidah was therefore a woman much ahead of her time in this respect as she rationally defied such expectations.

Nyai Abidah: Socio-Religious Activities

Nyai Abidah also managed a *majelis taklim* (Islamic learning council) for the local women in the Seblak mosque. One woman who used to participate in the *majelis taklim* said, "Sometimes while in the mosque, Nyai Abidah was reciting several chapters of the Quran at once. I just listened to her reading, for I could not recite that much like her in one time". When Nyai Abidah retired from most of her teaching activities in 2000, she only attended the *majelis taklim*, as it was taken over by her son-in-law, Kiai Taufiqurrahman. One afternoon, I was visiting the *pesantren* and met up with Nyai Abidah when the *majelis taklim* was being held in Masjid Seblak. She was dressed in a *kebaya* and *jarik* (a traditional Javanese cloth) and covered her head with a *jilbab* (the veil). She was one of the participants of the ceremony, even although she had retired four years previously. On that day, Nyai Abidah was sitting in the terrace of *Pesantren* Seblak *aula* (seminar room). The local women were in the mosque performing the religious ritual before the sermon of the *kiai*. On the right side of the mosque, *ibu-ibu*s were selling their goods for the *majelis taklim* attendee. A small group of *bapak-bapak*s (men) were also there in the ceremony, sitting at the terrace, which was not very far from Nyai Abidah. Although she was not actively engaged in the instruction of the *majelis taklim*, due to her age and for health reasons, her appearance signified her deep concern and strong support for the access of women to education.

In the official document of Kwaron village, she was recorded as being one of three religious leaders in the area (the other two were *kiai*s).[44] Until 2003, Nyai Abidah was still the person to consult about different *pesantren* affairs. In the seminar held by Cepdes on the topic of '*Pesantren*, Terrorism and Radicalism' on October 16, 2003, Nyai Abidah was the person who opened the seminar and gave the opening speech in front of the audience, consisting of both male and female participants. With a very clear voice and without a prepared text, she talked confidently in front of the public, including the foreign speakers. At the end of the workshop, she was invited to give a gift to those speakers, both local and international persons of note. She gave the gifts to both the male and female speakers, but she did not shake the male speakers' hands. This is part of the Islamic tradition in which she believed that a

Muslim woman should not shake hands with men except with those in the same *mahram* [45]categories. She came to the public space as a Muslim women with the 'Islamic' values, traditions and etiquettes that she believed and upheld.

Her initial involvement in public roles related to her activities in managing the first educational program for female students at *Pesantren* Seblak. Nyai Abidah's early involvement in the establishment of the *pesantren* for girls in *Pesantren* Seblak was a significant milestone, as she filled the gap of qualified female teachers to coordinate and teach the female students. Over time, her roles expanded beyond the *pesantren* boundaries to a broader public involvement in the socio-religious, political, and legal aspects of civil society. Her position as religious judge in the religious court of Jombang was quite unique, as it is very uncommon in the Muslim world to have a female religious judge at the religious court. Her roles and positions in the public space have proven that the public space within the *pesantren* and beyond is not an 'alien' space for women like her. Unlike her mother, she was not highly educated in the Islamic sciences or *kitab kunings*. Initially, she was only literate in the Malay script. However, her intention to learn and her determination to try something that was placed on her shoulders put her among the public figures who have made a significant contribution to the betterment of the *pesantren* and society. Her story is also one of the courage and determination of a woman who made a difference in her public roles despite the limitations attached to women within a *pesantren* tradition.

Nyai Mahshunah (Bu Sun)

Nyai Mahshunah is the granddaughter-in-law of Nyai Khoiriyah. She was born on December 29, 1952, in Jombang. She came from the family of *Pesantren* Darul Ulum Rejoso. The first formal education she attended, both elementary and secondary level, was the Islamic schools of *Pesantren* Darul Ulum. She finished senior high school in 1970. Apart from formal education, she also attended informal education in *Pesantren* Darul Ulum, which allowed her to learn *kitab kuning*s or different branches of Islamic studies. She represented a new generation of *nyais*, for when she was growing up, there was wide access to public education for women.

Nyai Mahshunah: Educational and Organisational Background

Upon completion of senior high school in *Pesantren* Darul Ulum Rejoso, one of the four well-known *pesantrens* in Jombang, she asked her father for his consent to allow her to study for a tertiary education. For this purpose, she had to 'struggle' to obtain her father's consent,

because her father opposed women pursuing a higher education, considering that it was unnecessary. Her struggle was successful. Finally, Nyai Mahshunah had the opportunity to study at the State Institute for Islamic Studies Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta. She also fought for her father's consent to allow her siblings to undergo further education. "I also convinced my father who doubted his ability to support us financially for our [higher] education. I said to my father, the *rezeki* [the financial income] surely will be there because Allah, The Almighty is Beneficent and Merciful."[46] One of her younger brothers studied for 13 years in Germany, and one of her sisters married an American and lives in America with her family.

During her stay in Yogyakarta, the city known as *kota pelajar* (the city of students), she came into contact with different organisations, starting with Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII, Islamic Students Movement of Indonesia) in Yogyakarta, of which she was the chairperson for the period of 1974-1975. She was also a chairperson of Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Nahdlatul Ulama (IPPNU, the NU Students Network) in Yogyakarta from 1975-1976. Her involvement in social and political organisations continued even after she completed her tertiary education in Yogyakarta.

Nyai Mahshunah: in Pesantren *Leadership*

During the last semesters of her study at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN), she was married to Mr. Faruq, the son of Nyai Jamilah, Nyai Khoiriyah's daughter. When she was expecting her first baby, she returned to Yogyakarta to complete her Bachelor's degree and defended her Bachelor's thesis. After completing her study, she was strongly encouraged by her mother-in-law, Nyai Jamilah (Nyai Abidah's sister) who was the director of *Pesantren* Seblak, to return to Seblak and become an instructor at the *pesantren*. After Nyai Jamilah passed away, her husband, Mr. Faruq, succeeded as the leader of the *pesantren*, and automatically Nyai Mahshunah become the '*Nyai'* of the *pesantren*.

In her capacity as a '*Nyai'* of the *pesantren* and also through her other activities, she always tried to maintain a balance between many competing demands. In the early morning she would lead her female students in *subuh* (early morning) communal prayers, then give an instruction on the *kitab kuning*. In the morning, before leaving for her office, she would be available for dealing with some *pesantren* affairs. As the *nyai,* she was also responsible for giving permission to the students who wanted to leave the complex for other activities, and she would be the top-level person to decide the problems emerging among the hundreds of female students.

Nyai Mahshunah: Political Activities

Nyai Mahshunah's political activities began during the New Order Suharto period of government. From 1990, amid her activities within the *pesantren* and NU women's wing organisation, Nyai Mahshunah began to get involved in the political arena. In 1999 she was appointed as the vice-chairperson of Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (DPRD, Regional House of Representatives) Jombang from the Partai Persatuan Pembanguan (PPP, United Development Party).[47] From 1989-1992, she was also a chairperson for the Fatayat NU organisation in Jombang, and the vice-chairperson of the party board of Jombang from 1999 until the present, and the chairperson of the committee of Panitia Persatuan Pembangunan (the committee of united development) for the whole of the Surabaya regions from 1999 until 2003. Her involvement in the political party brought her into a political career in DPRD. She took up several positions such as the vice-chairperson of the *Komisi C* (a commission on development issues) of DPRD Jombang from 1997-1998; the vice-chairperson of *Komisi A* (a commission for governance issues) of DPRD Jombang from 1998-1999; the vice-chairperson of DPRD Jombang from 1999 until 2004, and she was also appointed to the regional *Dewan Pendidikan* (education board)[48] of Jombang for the period of 2004-2009. On her involvement in the DPRD, Nyai Mahshunah said:

> I just want to prove that, as women, we are capable of being progressive ... because in the past women have been the victims of subordination. I used to tell my *santriwati* that, as women, you should be progressive, especially in terms of education, because it will give you your proper position in society.[49]

In 2003 she was still in her position as the co-chairperson of the DPRD Jombang. This very important political position signified the bargaining position of her large political party. The positions of the chairperson and co-chairperson were chosen by the political parties, which attained the greatest number of public voters and had a number of members in parliament. Apart from her activities in DPRD, she carried out her duties in the *pesantren*. She was the *imam* (leading the prayers), especially the *Subuh* prayer. She was an instructor for religious matters. After early morning prayers once a month, she gave instruction in the *majelis taklim* (Islamic learning council) for local women, which was held in the *pesantren*. Her life was very full with these political, educational and religious engagements.

Nyai Mahshunah revealed that the opportunity and skills she developed and utilised in managing a lot of people within the *pesantren* gave her significant experience when it came to dealing with people from

different backgrounds in her political position among the chairpersons of the DPRD. Beginning as someone who had been initially denied access to a tertiary education because she was a woman, Nyai Mahshunah has been involved in a wide range of public activities and engagements, both in the leadership of the *pesantren* and beyond. Her presence has particularly inspired the next generation of her students as well as her daughters,[50] who have ensured the *pesantren* has enjoyed an un-interrupted chain of female involvement in its leadership and management.

As the *nyai* of the *pesantren*, she was responsible for leading the female pupils in communal prayers. She was also the leader or manager of the *pesantren*, resolving any issues or problems relating to the *pesantren* or the students. Some *Nyais* had regular programs giving advice, mainly to female students, in addition of their instructional duties. Nyai Mahshuna said: "I try to be in touch with the students all the time. Apart from my political activities, I make time to be with the students, be an *imam* for their communal prayer and give the *kuliah subuh* [a brief sermon after the early morning prayer] for them every day to encourage them to study seriously."[51]

Theorising the Public Activities of the *Nyais*

First of all as wives of *kiai*s or the daughter of a *kiai*, all of the *nyais* discussed above are '*ibu*' or *nyai* for their *pesantren*. Their status as members of the *kiai*'s immediate family gives them particular privileges within the *pesantren* tradition. Nevertheless, all of the *nyais* discussed above are the real '*Nyai*s' for their *pesantren*. In addition, the public roles in which they were engaged were also distinguished. If Nyai Khoiriyah tended to be more concentrated on the educational aspects and seemed to keep clear of the real political roles or activities, both Nyai Abidah and Nyai Mahshunah extended their public roles to the political arena when they became members of parliament. Nyai Abidah was one of the members of the *konstituante*. Nyai Mahshunah was an active participant in the political party, which finally placed her as the member of DPRD Jombang. Both Nyai Abidah and Nyai Mahshunah had no specific educational background in the political field, nevertheless their appointment as members of parliament or as one of the chief leaders of the political party suggests the public recognition of their qualifications for those positions.

The stimulus to have 30 per cent of women candidates for the house of representatives has opened up more space for *pesantren* women to be engaged, particularly through Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) and Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP). The participation of *nyais* or the women from *pesantren* backgrounds in the post-*reformasi* era (1998-

2003) and the transition to democracy (2004-present) is quite significant, particularly in East Java. For instance, in the case of Jombang, all of the three women members in DPRD come from the *pesantren* background. Some began their engagement in Muslimat NU or Fatayat NU. The organisations like Muslimat or Fatayat NU are NU wings for their female members. When women become parliamentary candidates, they represent the main political party in the parliament, with similar authority and duties to those of their male counterparts.

Among the three generations, Nyai Khoiriyah did more in the sense of religious public roles than the two other women from the following generations. She was involved in the initial effort of establishing the school for girls in Mecca and was also a significant participant in the *bahsul masail* among other *kiai*s and religious leaders. In addition, she was also a member of the *majelis syuriah* PBNU, an exclusive privilege that only happened once to the women of NU throughout the NU history. Due to her deep understanding of Islamic sciences, she was even appointed to positions that were not commonly available to women. Nyai Khoiriyah's daughter, Nyai Abidah, attained more varieties of public positions. In the political field, she was appointed as a member of the *konstituante*, in the national parliament during the Sukarno era. She represented the generation when the women of nationalist and religious organisations shifted from their struggle for national independence to the real political moves in post-colonial Indonesia. She was a religious judge and was also a leading figure of Muslimat NU, particularly of East Java province. The *nyais* like Nyai Abidah and Nyai Khoiriyah began their activities as *pesantren* leaders and instructors. As *pesantren* figures, those women could not be excluded from the nationalism movement, in which the religious organisations like Aisiyah and Muslimat NU also took part.[52]

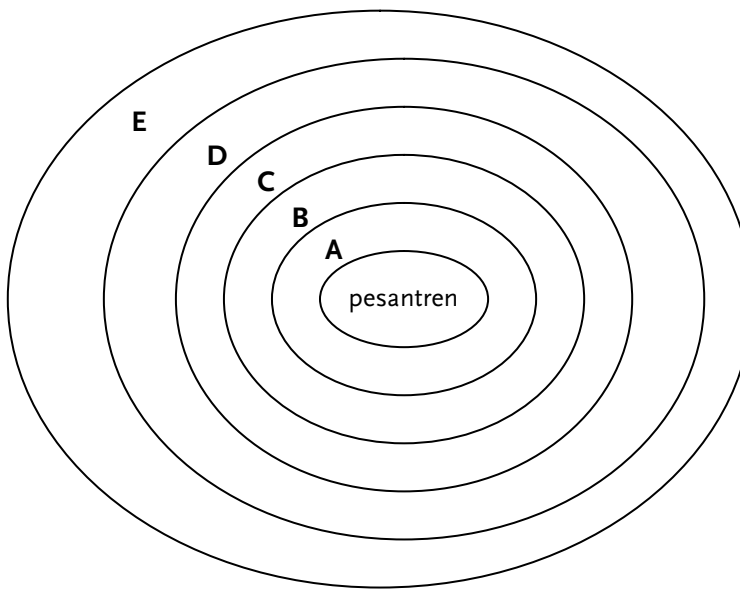
The figure of Nyai Mahshunah represents the younger *pesantren* generation. The wide access to public education affected her, and amidst

Figure 4.1 *Categorisation of the nyai's public roles*

	Educational leadership	Instructional process	Socio-religious organisations	*Majelis taklim*	Political field	Judicial field	Others
Nyai Koiriyah	◆	◆	◆	◆			*bahsul masail*
Nyai Abidah	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Nyai Mahshunah	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		Public educational board

the conservative views of her family on education for women, she was able to achieve a tertiary education degree. Nyai Mahshunah represented the period when a number of *pesantren* women were formally educated. Her position as a member of parliament was a result of the formal process she entered through her engagement initially with a particular political party. Thus, it was not only due to her membership of Fatayat or Muslimat NU.[53] She came with a specific sense of professionalism and a concentrated focus on the process for fulfilling her public position. Interestingly, for each of these women, their sense of social responsibility meant that they assumed and were given positions that might otherwise have been given to their husbands. The prominent role of these women is no longer seen as an aberration, but over the generations has been normalised to a certain extent. This then acts as an inspiration for greater public engagement by the young female students for whom they are responsible. Finally, from all of the general public roles of those *nyais* from *Pesantren* Seblak or beyond, the diagram below differentiates the degrees of the interconnections of their public roles to the *pesantren*.

Figure 4.2 *Layers of nyais' activities*



A *Pesantren* leadership, management and instructional duties
B Religious instruction for local people (*majelis taklim*)
C Socio-religious organisation
D Religious court
E Political field

The first layers of A and B particularly indicate the closest public roles associated with the *nyai*'s position as a *pesantren* female leader, as a member of the immediate family of a *kiai*. For that kind of activity, the power she has is mostly a derivative power from her male counterpart through the process of what is described as '*priyayization*' (the process of upper classness) by Niewenhuis. Some exceptions occurred in this aspect, when those *nyais* were the sole director or a *nyai sepuh* or when their husband passed away, as in the case of Nyai Khoiriyah and Nyai Abidah. When Nyai Mahshunah's husband passed away in 2004, she was the most senior member in the collective leadership of the *pesantren*. The outer layers indicate the public positions earned which are not closely related to her position as a *pesantren* leader or *kiai*'s family. This includes the positions earned by *nyais* through their engagement with organisations like Muslimat or Fatayat NU, and also their attachment to one political party, as in the case of Nyai Mahshunah, who was also the leader of the political party for her region. The power they had in this regard relied more on their performance and achievement, not simply a derivative power from their male counterparts, who were the *kiai* of the *pesantrens*. In the political and legal fields, they have achieved a power that is more than derivate power; their position is just like that of any other people achieving those positions.

Analysing those *nyais*' activities reflects the ambiguity or the fluidity of the public and private realms. The public roles a *nyai* played within the *pesantren's* domestic affairs were that of a manager for the *pesantren* household. Some *nyais* extended the boundaries of the private realms (a realm which also has a degree of publicness), as illustrated by the diagram, and entered the public space of the *pesantren* by being an educational leader or manager, which was then supplemented by other public positions beyond their *pesantren* or the community at large. It is important to establish here that if they dealt more intensively with their female counterparts within the public *pesantren* position or in the religious field such as the *majelis taklim*, then the position as a political leader, a member of *bahsul masail*, or a religious judge would bring them beyond the scope which only covered women or women's issues.

Although a *pesantren* will acknowledge that a *kiai* and his son are the recognised leaders inside and outside the *pesantren*, nevertheless a *nyai* with good qualifications will find it possible to negotiate her way into the *pesantren* public roles of leadership and management. According to Mas'udi, to have women in a leadership position within a male-dominated organisation requires some notable female figures to challenge the traditions, and this should be several influential women with good qualifications working together. If women's access to public education is increased, the chance of having women in leadership positions

within *pesantrens* as well as society will always be possible.[54] The emergence of educated women from *pesantrens* or *kiai*s' families will assist this process.

Between Public and Private Lives

From a different perspective, since the majority of Indonesian communities still live according to patriarchal values, with the assumption that women are particularly charged with undertaking domestic chores, it was not easy for those female figures to pursue their involvement in the public space. Beyond their public positions and activities, they are still viewed as women who by nature should be a good wife and mother. Those female figures of whom I have written were aware of this expectation, and all of them considered the need to be a good manager for their household activities. They were aware that fulfilling domestic duties is essential for them. The ability to move into the public sphere was only possible when they had shown an ability to manage the private domain successfully.

For those *nyais*, having a good arrangement for their domestic activities was one of the necessary conditions for their expansion into the public space. This is a significant issue that should be borne in mind in discussing the proper position of Muslim women in society. This issue cannot be adequately understood without knowing precisely how Muslim women perceive their status within a Muslim social order. This is one of the reasons why Muslim women may generally find it difficult to adopt a western model of feminism predicated on premises deemed universally applicable. Firstly, Muslim women do not necessarily perceive "family ties and kinship ties [as] a hindrance to women's 'liberation'."[55] The decision made by Nyai Mahshunah to get married while she was still a university student also suggests that she never considered that marriage would be a barrier to her dream of pursuing education. When she was seven months pregnant, she was able to finish her studies at the university. Being a mother and a wife did not mean all of their time was occupied in family matters, because they had help with their domestic duties, and keeping the balance between the two realms was always seen to be important.

In terms of the latter, Nyai Abidah said: "I'll try to go out for other activities after I am sure that I have done my duties at home. Therefore I prefer not to have outside activities in the early morning, because at that time, I still have to deal with my duties at home."[56] In the same vein, Nyai Mahshunah commented on her activities:

> Regardless of my public activities, I still set aside time to manage the household, to make sure that everything is under control, to

> be with my children as much as I can and give directions to the maids who are in charge of preparing meals. I also make a commitment to attend only those ceremonies for which my presence is really needed, where no-one can replace me. But if my presence is not essential and my duties can be performed by others, I prefer not to go.[57]

A well-managed domestic sphere provides a woman with the 'legitimacy' to negotiate access to public life with the significant males in her household. As such, women with religious, cultural and educational capital can aim to inhabit the public and private spheres at the same time. The question is: "Do they have a double burden?" The *kiai* household resembles the upper class or 'aristocrat' family. All of the *kiai*'s households have several assistants for different jobs, and they come from different backgrounds – either their pupils, extended families or the local people. So these women are more like managers of the *kiai* household rather than workers in it. Mansurnoor's research on the *kiai* in Madura portrayed the *nyai* as a manager in the *kiai* household, having several people to assist her with domestic duties.[58] For lower-class women, their involvement in economic activities in the public sphere does not necessarily mean egalitarian gender relations: however, middle-class women who were involved in the public sector had fairer relations with their male counterparts. This is because they were involved in public life for *aktualisasi diri* (self-actualisation), not because of urgent economic needs. Also, middle-class women are more likely to have servants to carry out the domestic chores. This theory is relevant to the experiences of the *nyai* discussed above.

Supporting the Agency of Pesantren *Women: Examining Kiai's Roles*

The view of the *kiai* figure as a traditional, fanatical and inflexible person is problematic since in reality a number of *kiai*s are quite flexible and open-minded.[59] In Khoiriyah's case, her father had an initial significant influence, as she had an early education from her father, who allowed her to 'attend' his classes, whereas most women in her time did not have such a rare opportunity. Nyai Abidah (80) said:

> Mbah Hasyim [Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary] supported us to establish the *pesantren putri* in Seblak, otherwise we would not have been daring enough to do so, because at that time women were prohibited from having an education. Even some people said that it is forbidden (*haram*) for a woman to learn.[60]

The opportunity for Nyai Abidah to be involved in socio-political roles in a public sphere also stems from the micro-culture of the family, especially the world view of the *kiai*: "... although a woman is active, if it is not supported by her husband, it doesn't work".[61] Lily also described how her father voluntarily offered to look after their children when Nyai Abidah felt reluctance to take up her position because she had several little children occupying her time.

She believed that her father was a moderate *kiai* who had a more open-minded view on women's issues. Lily Zakiyah Munir herself did her Master's degree in Holland after completing her Bachelor's degree. "My elder sister studied at the medical faculty. The people made negative comments on her study, especially when she seemed to be independent during her study. They said, 'it is improper for a woman'."[62]

For Nyai Mahshunah, the support she gained was also a result of a dialogue that she built up with her husband. Nyai Mahshunah's activities outside the household and *pesantren* consumed her time and energy. Initially, at one stage, she was challenged by her husband about her activities. She said to her husband:

> ... [S]ince the early beginning, I think I have asked your permission for my activities, but then when I got the public appointments as the consequence of my early activities, I should not be blamed for that. Do you think I would be better if I just stay at home and so... My husband said "no no, I don't mean that". Afterward, sometimes, my husband used to pick me up from my work. It was really nice.[63]

In the interview, Nyai Mahshunah always emphasised the need for having a good dialogue with the male counterpart. For her, her husband was one of the keys to her success in negotiating the public space. When her husband passed away in April 2003, she managed the *pesantren* in a collective leadership together with her brothers and sisters-in-law. Upon his death, Nyai Mahshunah felt a great loss, she said: "I lost the supporter who used to encourage me. When I told my husband that I was elected to be the chairperson, he said, 'It is because the people trust you'."[64] Even during the political campaign, she said that her husband was more enthusiastic than she was.

The involvement of men in supporting the idea or giving women the chance to be empowered also exists generally within the Muslim community, because men gained more privileges within society earlier that gave them more right to speak. For instance, in the Islamic world, Qasim Amin was considered the first Muslim scholar to encourage the idea of women to be educated and empowered through the publication of his book *Tahrir al-Mar'ah* (Women's Emancipation). During his life,

he was known for his active campaign to give women more access to public education.[65] Within the history of *pesantren* education for women in Indonesia, Kiai Bisri Syansury and Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary were among the first religious figures who encouraged and provided ideas and access for women to be educated through *pesantren* education. The development of *pesantren* education for women was a synthesis of the desires and activities of women coupled with the support of significant male religious figures.

Within a *pesantren* setting, just like in the local society, men enjoy more privileges in terms of having access to education or other educational resources.

> ... [D]ue to the early marriage factor. Although the intention and potential to study was great among those pesantren women, since they had to get married, then the opportunities for educational access were limited in that time. Such as Ibu Abidah, Gus Dur's mother, Ibu Wahid Hasyim, they had to learn from their husbands ... the concept of *qawwamuna*, which is often interpreted as 'dominate'. In my father's interpretation, the word means 'empower'. So the interpretation of the Quranic verse (al-Nisa: 34) is not "men dominate women", but "men empower women", as a person who has a wide opportunity to be empowered, and physically is stronger has two main responsibilities: to cover the financial support for the women and to empower them, on in concrete action it is educating them when as women they have no chance to study...[66]

Kiai Machfudz Anwar even went further in his support for Nyai Abidah's activities, in that he offered to share the domestic burden with her, such as in minding the children to give her more opportunity for public roles. In this regard, Lily Zakiyah Munir viewed her father's offer to share the domestic responsibilities with her mother as quite fascinating, as this occurred in the 1950s. She believed her father was a progressive religious leader due to the internalisation of the 'Islamic values' themselves. It is noteworthy that, in Islam, in fact, there is also an interesting comment on the notion of 'housewife':

> ... [A] husband is required to maintain the standard of living his wife was accustomed to in her father's home, which may include an obligation to provide domestic help, child care, or even (as was more common in the past) a wet nurse, should his wife desire. If it is not consistent with her premarital lifestyle and status, she may neither be required to perform domestic labor nor even to nurse her own babies. Rather, upon marriage she becomes

> Sitt el-bait, or the lady of the house – a term that corresponds more accurately to her role as head manager of the household, and represents a different notion from that of "housewife" in the West.[67]

Nevertheless, such a discourse was not popular in the *kitab kuning*. There is no evidence about how familiar those *nyais* were with such a concept. The progressive ideas they had and the amount of power they could share with their male counterparts seemed to them to be natural. One thing is prevalent in their case; they were quite aware of their rights, of what they could achieve in their lives within the framework of the *pesantren* and religious values. They were also surrounded by male religious figures who were supportive enough, with a particular kind of gender sensitivity as well.

Nevertheless, it would be unfair to conclude that the opportunity attained by those female figures in public positions was simply due to the blessing of the *kiai*, although the figure of the *kiai* might be among the factors that supported their public participation. More significantly, the position also had something to do with their personal potential and capabilities and the opportunities available to them within the broader society. In this regard, those *nyais* had bargaining positions in 'negotiating' the public realms, not only with their male counterparts but also with the people who were engaged in the patriarchal view from the *pesantren* or the local society perspectives. Some of them had to 'struggle' with very traditional points of view of women from their fathers' perspectives. When Nyai Khoiriyah performed several public roles in pioneering the Madrasah Banat (school for girls) in Mecca or participated in the *bahsul masail* program, this was due to the fact that she was adequately equipped with the tools for these public roles. This confirms Afsaruddin's view that: "... for women of means and education in Islamic/ate societies, the exercise of power, formal or informal, and negotiation of public space have frequently been less of an ordeal than for women who do not enjoy the same advantages".[68]

The Notion of Honour and Modesty

Despite the capacity to enter public life, certain conditions are often applied when a Muslim woman inhabits the public space, such as the concern about honour and modesty, or "do they still subscribe to traditional norms of moral behaviour and respectability"?[69] Hegland's study on Muslim women *majales* in Peshawar, Pakistan, also shows how *Shi'a* women were engaged in subtle gender negotiation and modification through the practice of their religious morning rituals, the '*majales*'. Through this *majales* they also carried out political work; and by doing

this they followed the "central *shi'a* values and gender expectations: they worked under male guidance in sex-segregated female groups and wrapped themselves in proper *purdah* veils..."[70]

The women from *pesantrens* who appeared in the public domain also maintained the norms or values of respectability, especially when there were standard and fixed values either from the 'Islamic ' perspective or from their society's standard. This might be one of the ways for them to find a smooth path and acceptance for their presence in the public spheres. They are submissive to those values, accommodate those standards, and adhere to them in the public space. The first noticeable adoption of the 'Islamic' values is their dress code, in which all of them cover their head with the *selendang* and *jilbab* (the Indonesian covering resembling the veil).

The issue of veiling or dress code seemed to be uncontroversial among those *pesantren* women. The women from *pesantrens* have veiled themselves from generation to generation, although the styles might differ. A long *selendang* or *kerudung* was worn by the previous generation, while a person such as Nyai Khoiriyah was popular with her attachment to the *kerudung rubu',* which mostly resembles the *jilbab,* which is more popular among the current generation. The style of veiling between Nyai Abidah's and Nyai Mahshunah's generation may differ, but the mission they want to carry out with this veiling is almost the same. As Muslim women they intend to show their willingness to adhere to the so-called 'Islamic' dress codes as practised in Indonesia at the time. If for some women activists the struggle for empowerment also includes the freedom to choose whether to wear the veil or not, for the *pesantren* women, there is no compromise at all; they feel it as an obligation, and it is rare to hear them challenge the accepted practice. All of them appear in a dress which as closely as possible may be claimed to be Islamic dress.

It is interesting to learn that Nyai Khoiriyah promoted the concept of *kerudung rubu'* to the female students of *Pesantren* Seblak. This covers the head and the neck and also covers the jewellery of the wearer, to eliminate the social gap between the rich and the poor among her students. Female students showing off their expensive jewellery in the *pesantren* is considered to be incompatible with the emphasis of *pesantren* and 'Islamic' values on modesty and simplicity. As a response, Nyai Khoiriyah founded a team to solve this problem, and finally a new model of headscarf was introduced, namely the *kerudung rubu'* which was assumed to be in conjunction with and suits the youth model. This *kerudung rubu'* was firstly introduced in 1964 when Nahdlatul Ulama celebrated its anniversary. At this event, the female students from *Pesantren* Seblak wore the *kerudung rubu'* combined with their long blouse *baju kurung* and trousers. Although some *pesantrens* have strict regulations

that the students may not to wear any outfit which resembles a man's, such as trousers, according to some alumni of the *pesantren* from the earlier generation under Nyai Khoiriyah, the students formally dressed up in trousers with a long blouse. Nyai Khoiriyah herself also wore trousers under her traditional *jarik*, costume, to make her activity more flexible and to help her to keep her *aurat*[71] covered in an active environment.

Not only adhering to the dress code, those women also focused attention on the limitations of their personal relationships. They avoided a close relationship with the men from non-*mahram* categories (whom they can marry). Nyai Mahshunah said: "I prefer to have a female assistant to help me with my duties. I also try to work seriously and after that leave the office if I feel the works have been completely done, instead of hanging around and having a chat on the different unnecessary issues."[72] Most of her colleagues are male. There are only three women in the DPRD Jombang. Nyai Mahsunah tends to keep a distance in having a relationship with those male colleagues, since it is believed by the majority of the people that to have a close relationship with non-*mahram* categories is an improper attitude. They believe that Islam has set the norms and values on this issue, and these values are also cultivated in the *pesantren* instruction. I also saw the same notion in action when Nyai Abidah did not shake the hands of the male speakers when she gave them a gift after their presentation. She believed a Muslim woman should not shake hands with men except those who fit the *mahram* categories. She came into the public space as a Muslim woman determined to uphold 'Islamic' values, traditions and etiquette.

5 Santriwati's[1] Life

Religious Femininity in *Pesantren* Education[2]

Girls and *Pesantren* Education

In Indonesia, the *pesantren* as an Islamic educational institution has been commonly understood to produce an output of religiously devoted persons, the graduates being known as an *ulama* or a *kiai*.[3] A number of *ulama*s or religious figures come from a *pesantren* background, from the national down to the village level. They are primarily male figures. Each of them is accorded a strong sense of [public] religious power and authority. But considering the large number of female pupils in *pesantren*, one question that might arise is whether they too would be expected to be future *ulamas* for their society, just like their male counterparts? What does society or parents expect when they send their daughter to a *pesantren*? Does a *pesantren* education for girls have a different emphasis from that of a *pesantren* education for boys, or do the aims of *pesantren* education manifest themselves in both male and female experiences?

In a discussion entitled "*Perempuan Multikultural: Resistensi terhadap Konstruksi Agama dan Budaya*" (Multicultural Women: Toward the Resistance of the Religious and Cultural Construction) held at the Faculty of Cultural Science, University of Indonesia, Jakarta, one of the speakers said the experience of women in a *pesantren* cannot be empowering for them. For him, the *pesantren* is an institution resembling a *harem* in the Middle East, as it domesticates its women.[4] The segregated system of *pesantren* that separates male and female pupils can be understood as similar to a *harem* in that it limits women's mobility in their own quarters.[5] However, a *pesantren* is certainly not similar to a *harem* as it is a public educational institution. The life of women within a *pesantren* were quite different as in the case of several *nyai* mentioned in the previous chapter; their private and public lives overlapped and are ambiguous. Although it is segregated, a *pesantren* as an educational institution is still part of the public domain, not a private environment like a *harem*. Through several conversations with *pesantren* staff during the fieldwork, they stat that the reason for the physical segregation in a *pesantren* was not for restricting the physical mobility of women in a

male public space, it was more in order to maintain chastity and 'moral' development; the very principles that a *pesantren* education tried to preserve and are embedded within it.

Several perspectives can help to explain the connection between segregated education/single-sex education and Islamic values. The association of single-sex education and Muslim religious values is discussed in Halstead's work on Islam and single-sex school debates.[6] In his work, Halstead referred to the idea that single-sex education is derived from Islamic values. In contrast, the preferences for appropriate dress and behavioural codes, specifically for mixed contexts, are made explicit for both men and women in the Quran. "As the Prophet himself and his wife taught mixed-sex groups, it follows that sex segregated institutions could not be mandatory in Islam..."[7] Azyumardi Azra, a well-known Indonesian historian and Muslim scholar gives a more detailed elaboration that explains the nature of Islamic values and the ideals of segregated education in Islamic history. According to Azra,[8] in the early period of Islam, there was no educational segregation applied within Muslim community. Even more public access was available for Muslim women. Then, when Islamic jurisprudence began to be codified by Islamic jurists, the tendency to segregate women began, especially in the second century of the *hijriyya* (Islamic calendar, circa tenth century AD). A woman who wanted to learn would only do so from her close male relatives or from a certain *ulama* in a situation wherein she would not intermingle with her male counterparts. As a result of Islamic jurisprudence codification, the discourse on men's and women's rights and responsibilities and the principles related to their relationship were also codified and since then have been embraced by the Muslim communities as a tradition.

The concern for protecting women's moral values has also been the basis on which the *pesantren* world adopts educational segregation. In *pesantren* education, particularly within the instruction/learning process, the impact of single-sex education has not only affected the arrangement of the classrooms in which male and female pupils are separated, but also extended to the instructors. The basic rule is that female teachers are not allowed to teach male pupils' classes. They can only teach female ones, whereas a male teacher can be an instructor for both male and female pupils. This segregation is applied in most circumstances, ranging from the dormitory to the classroom and the mosque as well as to other *pesantren* public facilities. The opportunities for girls and boys from the same *pesantren* to have a social interaction are also restricted. Other social interactions with the opposite sex outside of the *pesantren* are also limited. Some *pesantrens* I visited have a written rule or discipline at the entrance of the *pesantren* that male guests from non-close family members of those female pupils are not allowed to pay a visit.

The girls are protected from having contact with men who belong to their non-*mahram*[9] categories.

Nevertheless, it is also important to be aware that in reality, the ways in which educational segregation is applied in a *pesantren* also varies, as there are no common standards or specific guidelines to be followed on this matter by all *pesantrens* throughout Indonesia. A government agency like the Ministry of Religious Affairs does not set up any standards related to these issues, this agency is concerned with the content of *pesantren* education, curriculum and the proportion of religious and non-religious subjects as well as pedagogical aspects. The issue of whether it should be a segregated educational model or not, and also the degree of the segregation, is solely dependent upon the internal policy of the given *pesantren* and its leaders.

According to Husein Muhammad, a traditional *pesantren* with no formal schooling system used to apply the segregation more strictly. [10] Male and female pupils were not allowed to meet, let alone talk or send personal letters to each other. *Pesantren*s used to be very careful and strict with regard to personal relationships between the sexes. The opportunities for both sexes to mix with each other were basically very few. However, in my observation in the field, I found the degree of the segregation applied does not depend on whether the *pesantren* is traditional or not, or whether it has formal schooling or not; it depends more on the *pesantren* leaders. In the fieldwork area for instance, I used to visit one *pesantren* that has no formal schooling system and is well known as a *pesantren salaf* (traditional *pesantren*) in the region. I could easily observe how social interaction between the different sexes was quite 'flexible' and not strict. When I discussed this observation with one of the *nyais* from the *pesantren,* she said this fact is partly due to the flexibility of the *kiai* or *pesantren* leader. Before Ramadan 2003, the *pesantren* held a ceremony like a *syukuran* (celebration) for those who had already completed their education in the *pesantren*. During the event, both male and female pupils of the *pesantren* did some performances on the stages such as *nasyid* before male and female members of the audience. More importantly, the special speaker invited to the ceremony to give a *tausiyah* was a woman, a *nyai* from one of *pesantrens* in Purwoasri Kediri. The guests and members of the audience were not only *kiai*s, *nyais*, male and female teachers of the *pesantren*, but also the parents and local people. The rows of seating for men and women were separated with a small curtain, however it was more a symbolic separation, as the interaction between men and women still happens as in the normal social life of the Indonesian community. The fact that a *nyai* was a speaker before *kiai*, [male] teacher and [male] pupils was also interesting, as usually a *pesantren* would not allow female teachers to teach male pupils.

The *Pesantren*: Moral Values and Differentiated Gender Treatment

The main concern of *pesantren* education in relation to moral values has also been outlined in the guidelines for *pesantrens* published by the Department of Religious Affairs. The book is titled *Pedoman Pembinaan Pondok Pesantren* 1987/1988 (The guidelines of *pesantren* 1987/1988: 12-3) published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. It is mentioned that there are four potential characteristics of a *pesantren* institution. Firstly, that *pesantrens* are spread throughout Indonesian society; secondly, they exist in rural locations through which *pesantrens* maintain close communication with the local people; thirdly, they have the option of a boarding-school system, through which more time can be devoted to learning, as the full day is spent in a *pesantren*. Finally, the *pesantren* is an institution for moral education. One of the *pesantren* leaders in the area said that there were those in the community who began to regard the *pesantren* as an institution to 'repair' or to 'fix up' the attitudes of an *anak nakal* (a naughty boy/girl). One of the staff members of a *pesantren* for boys said that he witnessed a new pupil who had *minuman keras* (alcohol) in his suitcase when he started his education in the *pesantren*. Getting drunk is prohibited from the religious point of view and is 'illegal' according to the rules of all of *pesantrens*. It is also a negative attitude from society's moral perspective. If the community stresses the moral values of the younger generation, a *pesantren* will preserve it by regulating particular rules and norms inspired by religious and moral values, to be obeyed by the pupils.

For the society in general, the reality that a *pesantren* is deeply concerned about religious and moral education means that parents rely on it significantly to handle the moral behaviour of their children. Some parents believe that in sending their daughters to the *pesantren,* they have a guarantee that it will be able to equip their daughters with the necessary religious and moral values for their future lives. In the field area, I found some cases in which pupils were sent to a *pesantren* at a very early age. One was a three-year-old girl, and another girl was nine years old. The parents had problems with their marriage and wanted to safeguard their children's education and future. The parents trusted the education and social milieu of *pesantren* to save their girls. The three-year-old girl was treated like their own younger sister by other female pupils of the same *pesantren*. One of female pupils of the *pesantren* said, "... just like a child of her age, sometimes she used to cry, particularly in the beginning when she just entered this *pesantren*, she cried a lot, we minded her together here, taking care of her, bathing her and feeding her; we treated her just like our own sister..."

For female *pesantren* pupils, apart from the common moral values applied to both male and female pupils, they also have other specific

moral values as Muslim women. Female pupils are treated in a particular way, represented by the gender-specific moral values that a *pesantren* promotes and implants. These moral values derive from both the religious and the socio-cultural aspects of the local society. The *pesantren* concept of Indonesian Muslim femininity is one that translates to a view of education as a way to prepare women for a future life; to deal with their maternal duties well; morally and religiously be a good wife and a good mother for the future generations. One of the female graduates of a *pesantren* said of her educational background, "I had no idea, I was just a little girl at that time, it was my parents who suggested that I study at *pesantren*, because they assumed that a *pesantren* education could produce a good wife and a good mother, something that every woman will get through this form of education".[11] Such a concept is widely embraced within Muslim communities, and the aim of education for girls as a process of preparation for their future maternal duties is not something new within Muslim communities either. Even the idea of Qasim Amin, the Egyptian Muslim scholar who initially campaigned for women's education within the Muslim world, is also similar. For Amin, education is a way to prepare better wives or more knowledgeable mothers to better develop the future generations.

> It is impossible to raise successful men if there are no mothers capable of preparing them for the success. That is the noble profession which civilization has entrusted in the woman in our age. She undertakes her heavy load in all civilized countries where we see her giving birth to children, then fashioning them into men.[12]

The above perspectives are also adopted by major South and Southeast Asian societies,[13] such as Malaysia.[14] In the Indonesian case, such an ideology has been strongly supported by the state and inspired various programs for women, particularly under the New Order regimes of Suharto's presidency. The New Order regime always tried to homogenize the idea of gender roles across the Indonesian archipelago.[15] The 32-year-old New Order regime in Indonesia enforced such an ideology for women. "Women are enjoined, as citizens, to carry out their wifely and motherly duties."[16] Therefore, it is not only *pesantren* education that has been influenced by such an ideology, but also the general education system in Indonesia.[17]

A specific treatment or content of education for girls in a boarding school like a *pesantren* is mentioned in scholarly works on boarding schools and segregated education. In her article on "Privileged, Schooled and Finished: Boarding Education for Girls", Okely elaborates on 1950s British boarding-school education: "as members of the same

social class the girls and boys may share similar educational experiences, but as members of different gender categories some of their education may differ".[18] Okely's portrayal of early England boarding schools is not directly comparable, but in the sense of implementing gender-specific educational treatment for the girls, the experience is also true in *pesantren* education. Apart from the physical segregation applied between girls and boys in *pesantrens* in Indonesia, the emphasis of the educational message conveyed to both groups also varies. If within general schooling both sexes receive the same subjects and the same educational message, within a segregated educational system, a *pesantren* can easily place more emphasis on feminine ideals for female pupils for instance. There are some subjects or textbooks introduced to female pupils, but not to male pupils, particularly the textbooks on the details of marital relationships like *Uqûd al-Lujjayn*. Some *pesantrens* have cookery and knitting skills in their curriculum, which are provided for female pupils only.

The provision of different subjects is made even more possible because of the boarding school system of *pesantren*, in which the pupils are lodged in dormitories in a *pesantren* complex. In manifesting their functions as a moral institution, the *pesantren* creates rules that have to be respected and obeyed by all pupils, both male and female. All *pesantren* have their own rules, which in most cases have some similarities with slightly different emphases or details. For instance, one *pesantren* does not allow female pupils to wear trousers, which are thought to resemble a man's outfit, whereas another *pesantren* might have some flexibility as long as trousers are not tight-fitting or made of denim. In comparing several rules from several different *pesantrens* in the field, I found that female pupils have more strict rules compared to their male counterparts. For instance, although both groups have some limitation on access out of a *pesantren* complex, male pupils are given more flexibility. Some *pesantrens* have a regulation that a female pupil has to be picked up by her parents or close (male) relative as a pre-requisite for her to return home, whereas other *pesantrens* arrange for their female pupils to go back in a group provided a teacher guardian is with them. Such a practice is not applied to male pupils.

Nevertheless, even with such rules and restrictions, these female pupils seems to grow up like other normal teenagers of their age. They have fun in their lives, share their personal stories i.e. their feelings for certain boys; they are fans of a favourite actress, etc. During fieldwork, one of the female pupils told me how she admires the Bollywood actor Shahrukh Khan. She said that as an actor Shahrukh Khan is very talented: "How could one person act as two different contradictory characters at the same time? The first time, I didn't like him, I thought he was a prototype of the playboy actor, but then I became his fan. For the

Hollywood actors, I favour Tom Cruise and Antonio Banderas. When I am at the *pesantren* I rarely watch TV, but if I return home, for sure I'll watch TV." The female pupils at different *pesantrens* I observed read teenager magazines ranging from religious ones to popular ones. The owner of the bookshop in the area said that the magazines most frequently purchased by the female pupils are *Hidayah*, *Annida* and *Aneka Yes*. The third one is a popular teenager magazine in Indonesia. However, the *pesantren* had already set up a rule that none of the pupils was allowed to go to the movies, and none of them was allowed to have a date while being a pupil and living in the *pesantren*.

Kitab Kuning: On Gender Relations

In his ground-breaking work, van Bruinessen has already provided an extensive account of the *kitab kuning* taught throughout Indonesia, Thailand and the Malay peninsula. The lists of *kitab kuning* that Bruinessen collected reflect the range of textbooks used in Indonesian *pesantrens* to teach Islamic exegesis, theology and jurisprudence, as well as Arabic grammatical rules.[19] Teaching and learning *kitab kuning* has been an integrated part of the *pesantren* learning tradition. The *kitab kuning* contains a variety of materials that can be classified into several main subjects, such as *tafsir* (Quranic exegesis), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), etc. The majority of *kitab kuning* are classical texts written by Middle Eastern *ulama*. Nevertheless, some *ulama Jawi* (the *ulama* from the Archipelago) have also written a number of *kitab kuning*s, such as Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantany, Syaikh Arsyad al-Banjary, etc.[20] In the majority of *pesantrens*, the key subject of the curriculum is *fiqh*.[21] According to Muhammad, who is himself a *kiai* from a *pesantren* in West Java, "there are indeed several problems in *fiqh* concerning gender roles and the status of women, leading to the idea of marginalizing women".[22] On the other hand, Kiai Sahal Machfud, a NU *ulama* and *pesantren* leader of Central Java, argued that in fact the *kitab kuning* contains some empowering aspects for women as well: for instance, women are glorified in a mother-and-son/daughter relationship, and women and men are equal in terms of their spirituality before Allah.[23] The spiritual equality is acknowledged especially when the authors of *kitab kuning* discuss the Quranic verses *Innâ akramakum inda Allah atqâkum* (The most noble of you before Allah is the most devout of you), as the verse conveys the meaning of the equality of all human beings before God. He goes on to further elucidate the issue of gender equality:

> [A]lthough it contains some empowering perceptions on women, this does not mean that *fiqh* has no problems with regard to

> women issues. For instance in dealing with the choice of life partners, a woman is faced with the concept of *ijbar.*[24] In accessing the information from the external world, a woman is still stigmatised by the assumption that there is no need for them to be provided with external information (professional knowledge) as their roles are basically at home.[25]

For female pupils, there is an emphasis on the *kitab kuning* related to marital life and domestic life more broadly, such as '*Uqûd al-Lujjayn, Adâb al-Muâsyarah,* and *Qurratul 'Uyûn.*[26] Criticism of the *kitab kuning* in regard to gender issues is quite common today, even with the people from a *pesantren* background. Masdar Mas'udi, the director of P3M, is known as one of the pioneers who tried to deconstruct the patriarchal religious interpretation in the *kitab kuning* discourses. Mas'udi argued that the gender bias of the *kitab kuning* is of a sociological rather than theological nature.[27] One of the factors behind it, according to Mas'udi, is the fact that the majority of *fiqh* scholars were themselves male and lived in the male-dominated period of the Middle Ages in Middle Eastern settings.[28] Therefore, *fiqh* seems to promote the status quo and therefore "has no critical discourse of the dominant realities now in existence".[29] In one of his works, Mas'udi encourages the presence of female *ulama* to give a balanced perspective to the male *ulama* who have dominated the religious discourse as a whole, including matters which are specifically related to women.[30] Similarly, van Bruinessen confirmed that female *ulama* could come up with a more balanced elaboration and interpretation regarding women's issues in the *kitab kuning.*[31] He mentions the example of a *kitab kuning* entitled *Perukunan Jamaluddin,* written by a Malay female *ulama*, Fatimah.[32] This *kitab kuning* is a concise and simple textbook on the rituals of prayer, fasting, and some Islamic jurisprudence matters. According to van Bruinessen, the elaboration in the *kitab kuning* created by Fatimah does not regard women as inferior or less pure, but rather treats women's issues in a more balanced and egalitarian way.[33]

Moreover, most *kitab kuning*s were written in the Middle Eastern socio-historical context, and to some extent do not properly represent the real lives of Muslim women in other parts of the world like Indonesia. Because of this, Wahid promoted the idea of '*fiqh* Indonesia' (Indonesian Islamic jurisprudence), the *fiqh* that is based on the realities in the Indonesian context and practised within the Indonesian (Muslim) communities.[34] The socio-political situation of Indonesian women is dissimilar to that of the Middle East or other countries.[35] Based on *fiqh,* the women from countries such as Saudi Arabia are not allowed to have wide access to the public space or to act as religious judges. Albeit within certain limitations, Indonesian Muslim women

can be involved in various public activities or professions, and there are also some Indonesian women who have been appointed as religious judges, something that is not very common in other Muslim countries, even in another Southeast Asian Muslim country like Malaysia.

Uqûd al-Lujjayn in the Pesantren

In the discussion of gender and Islam, particularly related to *pesantren*, *Uqûd-al-Lujjayn* is one of the *kitab kuning*s taught and is always an issue of central discussion and criticism. Compared to other *kitab kuning*, this *kitab* is quite frequently criticized, as it is believed to convey the idea of non-egalitarian gender relations between husbands and wives or men and women in Muslim marital life. In my observation, this *kitab* is not taught for male pupils, but mainly for female pupils or women participants of *majelis taklim*. Compared to other *kitab*s discussing the same topic, *Uqûd al-Lujjayn* is much more popular within the *pesantren* world and has become the main textbook on the rights and responsibilities of a husband and a wife, or marital life in general.[36]

The author of this *kitab* was Imam Nawawi al-Bantany, a nineteenth-century Mecca-based *ulama*, originally from Tanara, Banten.[37] He was highly esteemed for his knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence and Quranic exegesis. Nawawi was among the most productive *ulama Jawi*, writing 24 *kitab kuning*s.[38] He had a strong influence on the *ulama*s from different parts of the Archipelago. Among his pupils were the well-known *ulama*s such as Kiai Hasyim Asyary, Kiai Ahmad Dahlan, and Kiai Cholil Bangkalan and some other *ulama*s from the Archipelago. All of Nawawi's *kitab kuning*s are still published and sold in Indonesia, and perhaps the most popular of his *fiqh* works is *Uqûd al-Lujjayn*. Mustofa Bisri[39] in the introduction to a critical analysis on *Uqûd al-Lujjayn* commented:

> ... [I]n reading academic work, either kitab kuning or other textbooks, apart from looking at the method applied in the work, we also have to be aware of the sociological setting when the work was written. As we know, Imam Nawawi wrote *Uqûd al-Lujjayn* around 1294 H [circa nineteenth century A.C.], when he was 64 years old. This was more than one century ago. From the period when he wrote the book we can understand and even we cannot imagine something more than what he wrote in his work. Furthermore, he also wrote his work using the transmission method, in which he referred to the previous *ulamas*. If at the recent time, the issue of gender is still problematic and women are not appreciated as they should be, can we imagine what happened one century ago?[40]

Regardless of discussions and critics, this *kitab* is still used in a number of *pesantrens* in Java, although it is not very popular in other regions of Indonesia like Aceh. Some *pesantren* in Java had a session on the *kitab* during Ramadan. When I was in the field, I participated in the class of *Uqûd al-Lujjayn*, in which all of the participants were teenage *pesantren* pupils. It is difficult to evaluate the impacts of the contents of the *kitab* on those teenagers. What I observed was during the lesson, those female pupils smiled and laughed when the discussion was about the romantic relationship between husband and wife, none of them asking for clarification on particular issues discussed in the *kitab*, even on issues which seem to be uncommon and difficult to apply in current social life.

Some *nyais* I met in Jombang said that although it seemed to be problematic, she still decided to teach the *kitab* to her pupils. "The content of the *kitab* is just to make women keep alert", in her words "*untuk jaga-jaga*" (for alert), meaning that the text advises the highest and best boundaries. "It is better to know the highest boundaries and the worst possibilities, and be prepared for not going beyond those boundaries. If I am teaching the *kitab* I will contextualise the text to the current time, and our own context." If the *kitab* emphasizes the life of women in the household and glorifies the total submission of wife towards husband even to the extent of not going outside the home without his permission, although she received the news that her parent was severely ill (one of the stories mentioned the *kitab* and quoted a lot in the religious sermon in Indonesia), then, in reality, the *nyais* of the *pesantren* show by example that they themselves are active outside the household. By her actions, the nyai has created an alternate 'text', and this 'text' also has an impact on their female pupils. It is the public activities of the *nyais* as *santri ibu* that provide a model for the young girls in the *pesantren*, casting a different perspective on the ideas inscribed in the textbooks. Their admiration of their *nyais*, their roles and knowledge were commonly encountered throug the conversation with female pupils in the field.

The teaching of the *kitab kuning* has been a main characteristic of learning and instruction in a *pesantren*.[41] The gender discourse in the *kitab kuning* taught in *pesantren* has been studied by Mas'udi,[42] Mahfudz,[43] and Muhammad,[44] all of them coming from a *pesantren* background. They highlight some of the problems pertaining to women's issues in the Islamic classical literature of some *kitab kuning*s taught in *pesantren*, particularly on the subject of Islamic jurisprudence. Their thoughts represent those of critics from within the *pesantren* community itself. Anik Farida mentions that introducing a contemporary discourse of gender issues to a *pesantren* will inevitably lead to criticism of some materials on gender relations elaborated in the *kitab kuning*.[45]

Nonetheless, according to Farida, amidst the challenges of introducing gender perspectives within the *pesantren*, the snowball of gender discourse in the *pesantren* world continues to roll.

As an example of the conflicting patriarchal ideas in the *pesantren* textbooks, in *Uqûd al-Lujjayn* it is mentioned that a husband is allowed to beat his wife for several reasons, such as if a wife refuses to beautify herself for the sake of her husband, if a wife goes out of the house without his permission, if a wife uncovers her face in front of the *non-mahram category*, or if she talks with other men. The author's description of the right of a husband to "educate" his wife by beating her reflects how he was influenced by the historical and sociological context of his time, especially with reference to the covering of the face. Although an in-depth study of the *Uqûd al-Lujjayn* might also show some pro-gender perspectives in the textbook, the patriarchal images are much stronger.

Beyond *Uqûd al-Lujjayn*, there are several other references in the discussion of marital relationships between husband and wife taught in the *pesantren* world. During the fieldwork, through my observation of some *pesantren* for girls in the area, I found two other textbooks which are also used to teach the female pupils, namely *Qurratul 'Uyûn* and *Adâb al-Muâsharah*. Although the textbooks take different perspectives on marital life or gender relations between husband and wife, the basic concept of looking at the nature of gender relations between a man and woman is relatively similar. Among the three textbooks, it seems that *Adâb al-Muâsharah* is a little more contextual in accommodating the contemporary sociological contexts of Muslim women.

Apart from the issue of marital relationships, the textbooks also contain materials on specific moral behavior for girls in their early teens namely *Akhlâq li al-Banât* (ethics for girls). *Akhlâq li al-Banât* discusses the ideal figure of a teenage girl who studies seriously, has a good relationship with her family, relatives, and friends, and diligently assists her mother in domestic activities. In this *kitab*, the gender relation is polarised in a simplistic dichotomy, as reflected by the parents of the subject: her father works outside the household, and her mother stays at home, dealing with the domestic chores. In fact, many local women, especially those at the grassroots level, also participate in traditional economic activities outside their household to earn additional income for the family. However, such realities are not accommodated in the textbook, although it was written by a local author. This is a sample of some passages that are related to the idea of women's domestic activities:

> Zainab is a diligent girl, since she was very young she loves to work, and hates laziness, and she loves to help her mother at

> home. If her mother cooks and makes a cake, or washes the clothes she will approach her and try to practise it and imitate what she did. If her mother asks her something she will help her immediately, once she was asked by her mother to buy some groceries, at other times she was asked to go to the neighbours' and relatives' houses. She will not refuse, therefore she received the blessing from her mother. And then it does not take long until she is able to do the domestic chores by herself, and she replaces her mother's position in this regard, and her mother could have a rest from her burdens, and you should be like this beloved girl.[46]

In addition, although this *kitab* does not talk about the duties and responsibilities of a husband and wife, it does describe a particular gender ideal represented by the figure of the parent. A mother is portrayed as being at home, doing the domestic chores as well as taking care of the children, whereas a father works outside the house and earns the income for the family.

> Your mother is caring for you all the time, in the morning she wakes you up, then she bathes you and puts on your dress, and combs your hair, then she prepares breakfast for you. In the afternoon, she prepares your lunch and in the evening she prepares your dinner...[47] Please be advised girls, like your mother, your father also loves you, he is going out every day from home, enduring the suffering to earn money to cover you and your mother and your siblings. He bought clothes and goods for you, your mother and your siblings.[48]

In this *kitab kuning*, the gender relation is polarised in a dichotomous way; a man works outside the household and becomes the breadwinner for the family. In the text, women are rarely described as doing work to support the family financially. They refer to the classical Islamic jurisprudence, in which basically women are exempted from earning income for the family. This ideal concept also exists in several other *kitab kuning*s.

In addition to the influence of the textbooks, the element of local Javanese ideals of gender relationships in the *pesantren* tradition should also not be disregarded. A *pesantren* is significantly shaped by both local and non-local influences. The Javanese concept of *kanca wingking* (a partner at the back), meaning that women should stay within the domestic arena and support their husband from within the home, reinforces these behaviours and beliefs. The *pesantren* tradition is a result of the intersection between the local tradition of the Javanese and the non-

local tradition of the universal Islamic learning tradition, particularly from the Middle East. If the *kitab kuning* such as *Uqûd al-Lujjayn* is the product of the Middle Eastern socio-historical context, the perspectives in the *kitab kuning* are able to be more fully grounded culturally and religiously in the Javanese context. This makes the teachings of the *kitab kuning* stronger, and the ideas are more easily assimilated. On the gender issue and *kitab kuning*, Anik Farida[49] published an article on gender discourse in *pesantrens* based on her research in a Magelang *pesantren* of Central Java province. She described how *pesantrens*, regardless of the claim of their resistance towards modernisation, still respond to the gender discourse in their own ways.

The attempt to 'contextualise' the *kitab kuning* from an analytical and critical perspective, particularly that of *Uqûd al-Lujjayn*, has been conducted by the Forum Kajian Kitab Kuning (FK3, forum for the study of *kitab kuning*), chaired by Sinta Nuriyah A. Wahid[50]. The team criticizes the *kitab kuning* by utilizing a critical and analytical method, in which first of all they provide the original text from the *kitab kuning*, followed by a critical study of the authenticity of the *hadits* or references of the *kitab kuning*, followed by analytical comments on the contextual and to some extent logical sequence of the cases presented in the *kitab*. The result of their work is published as a book, both in Indonesian and in Arabic.

Nevertheless, in my fieldwork I found that almost all of the *pesantrens* I visited and studied still use the original *kitab kuning* of Imam Nawawi, although some of the *nyais* were concerned with contextualising the *kitab kuning*. When I questioned one *nyai* as to why they did not use the outcome of the forum for a study on the *kitab kuning*, she said: "That is a good idea, yeah why not try that one."[51] Her opinion reflects her personal opinion and concern about the contradictory messages and therefore the ambiguous message of the *kitab kuning* that does not reflect the reality of women's lives. Nevertheless, in the interview, she also said that the *kitab kuning* was a product of a great *ulama*. From that point of view, she really respected the *kitab kuning*, but she suggested that there should be some efforts from the *pesantren* to contextualize it, and she said that this could be achieved through the instructional process in the classroom. Teaching the [original] *kitab kunings* has been a core characteristic of the educational identity of *pesantren* learning instruction. *Pesantren* education does not have a tradition of replacing the old classical textbooks of the *kitab kunings* with 'revised *kitab kunings*' for instance. This is something which commonly happens in the regular schooling system in Indonesia, in which textbooks are regularly revised (*kurikulum yang diperbaharui*, revised curriculum). The commitment to the old texts is related to the philosophical concept of a

pesantren as the institution that maintains the Islamic classical learning tradition.

Some *pesantrens* might not include the above *kitab kuning*s in their curriculum. For instance, in the case of Pesantren Salafiyah al-Machfudz Seblak, *'Uqûd al-Lujjayn* is not part of the curriculum, either on the regular educational program or the *Ramadan* course program. Lily Zakiyah Munir, Nyai Abidah's daughter, said: "It was never taught there, I don't know exactly why it was so, it seemed that my father could not trust the *kitab*..."[52] However the *kitab kuning* is taught in the majority of the *pesantrens* in the area, particularly during the Ramadan course; but the program was not taught to male pupils.[53]

Santriwati and Their Personal Stories

The difference experienced between the ideal and the real shows the ambiguity of teaching a strict division between public and private worlds.[54] During the course of my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to speak with and interview some female pupils of three different *pesantrens* for girls in Jombang. These were unstructured, informal interviews. The girls talked freely and openly, sometimes deeply, about their dreams and future. I was struck by how they still freely created images of their future, even within some restrictions of the *pesantren* education. This offered a rare glimpse into the impact of *pesantren* education on the thoughts and aspirations of individual pupils. The names of the female pupils are pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

Sakinah's Story

Sakinah spent her time after elementary school in two *pesantrens*. When I met her, she was among the senior pupils of her present *pesantren*. As someone who had experienced two different *pesantren* educations with two different situations, she seemed to be mature among pupils. She was a determined person. In the interview, she spoke frankly of her future dreams. She said confidently:

> I want to be a career woman and also have a role in serving the community. If I can make a wish, I also want to have a husband who can understand my activities outside the household, but it does not mean that I neglect my primary duties at home. The nyai used to say, "If you have completed your main duties at home, then why not have activities outside".[55]

In her statement, she emphasized that when she leaves home for her career, it does not mean she neglects her *tugas utama* (primary duties).

For her, a well-managed household is also a pre-requisite for having activities outside the home. To make it more complete, she wants to have a supportive husband who can understand her wish for a career. Like the majority of Indonesian women, she also put the harmony of the family as her priority; therefore, having an understanding husband would prevent conflict and misunderstanding between them regarding her duties within and outside the household.

During the conversation, she also told me more about what sort of career and activities she planned to do in the future.

> I have a lot of dreams, I want to work with a foreign company in the economic division, using the Islamic economic concept, I also want to have an NGO, which will help the naughty children, the drunken ones who are also involved in using drugs, to train them in particular skills, and then they could return to a better life. There are a lot of children like that in my village.[56]

At first, it seems odd to hear her dream of working in the economic division, and even with a foreign company, given the fact that the *pesantren* is basically an institution which focuses on teaching Islamic knowledge. However, her further statement about implementing the Islamic concept makes clear the influence of the *pesantren* education on her as she creates a dream for her future career. Another point that can be picked up from her statement is her intention to establish a non-governmental organization (NGO) to help drug users and train them, which is a reflection of a response towards a social problem. It points to how life within the *pesantren*, where the pupils are 'secluded' in their dorm and have limited contact with the local people, does not necessarily make the pupils lose their local sensitivity. In this regard, the effort to portray the *pesantren* as a community institution is relatively true. In a broader perspective, the *pesantren* still has a strong attachment to the local people; the means may be different, but the *pesantren* pupils are particularly motivated to serve the community. The above case also suggests that women are not exceptions in this regard. Another dream for her future that she shared with me was to be a "*nyai*". When I asked her what she meant by that, she said that whatever it means, the most important thing for her is to be an active woman who can control and manage an educational programme.

Jamilah's Story

On another occasion, I had the opportunity to meet another female pupil from a different *pesantren*. Jamilah has no formal education except for her traditional *pesantren* education. This means that she could not continue her studies in a formal educational institution. In addition,

she has no certificate of formal education, one of the requirements if she wants to apply for a job. She thus concentrated on memorizing the Qur'an.

> Basically, my father was illiterate about gender issues, but so far he never forced us to be what he wants. However, somehow I feel embarrassed and very unconfident that I don't have the certificate of formal education, I always attended the traditional *pesantren* which does not have the formal educational levels of the schools... My mother reminded me that the most important thing in this life is to be a fruitful person for others. The concept of *anfa'uhum li al-nas* (the most fruitful person for others) has become the philosophy of my life, I just have a very simple dream, I want my life to be of worth for others, that is all, not a big one (*cuma itu saja tidak muluk-muluk*).[57]

The concept of *anfa'uhum li al-nas* is commonly heard within a *pesantren* community. This is also a reflection of values implanted within a *pesantren* education. While high expectations are placed on graduates of the formal schools to obtain a professional job that generates a good income, it seems impossible for graduates who hold no formal schooling certificate to pursue further education or to apply for a job as some traditional *pesantrens* do not have a formal schooling system. Within the socialization of the concept of *qana'ah* (modesty) and *anfa'hum li al-nas*, the pupil can still create a "realistic" dream for their future.

Jamilah has a good sense of humour, combined with her maturity from different *pesantren* experiences. Talking about the regulations of a *pesantren*, she related how she broke the rule which prohibits pupils from reading novels.

> I started reading novels when I was at a traditional *pesantren* in Tuban district. During the semester break time, it was the season when we can find novels almost everywhere, because it was not under strict control of the staff, at that time there was no "inspection" for the novels. I had even read a pornographic novel because I was really curious what it looks like, then I just read it till I felt myself bored with it, it just told the same thing (*ya gitu-gitu ajasampai akhirnya bosan sendiri*).[58]

She read novels just for fun and was quite confident that she would not be influenced by the negative impact of the novels. She even believed that it might cause some positive impact in terms of stimulating her *budaya baca* (reading culture). I asked her, if so, why then does the *pesantren* not allow the pupils to read novels? She explained that there is a

worry that the pupils will be negatively "seduced" by the pornographic content of the novels. Again, it is clear that a *pesantren* tries to take some precautions against negative impacts on their pupils. Obviously, some of the *pesantren*'s rules are actually based on such a consideration.

Maryam's Story

I also had some discussions with another female pupil who shared her ideas on *pesantren* education. Maryam said that when she was a little girl, her dream was to be a doctor.

> Yeah, when we were young, everyone will say they want to be a doctor, but now, we are mature enough to think what we really want to be. To study at pesantren is my decision, but I got strong support from my parents. I learn a lot from the pondok [pesantren], so it is fair if I also can contribute something for this pesantren in the future... I have a dream of pursuing my further education in Egypt in the subject of Quranic exegesis.[59]

When I asked her, "Do you think some people will say that as a woman, there is no need for you to study in higher education?" She replied confidently, "*Kalau kita dengerin omongan orang melulu, kita tidak akan maju*" (If we always want to listen to others, then we would not be progressive). It seems on the one hand she is aware of a conservative perception towards women; nevertheless, on the other hand, she does not care about it. Such a strong motivation to pursue higher education is not uncommon among the female pupils of a *pesantren*. I easily found such a progressive spirit as I talked to other female pupils during my fieldwork.

Discussing their future plans after *pesantren* education, almost all of the girls showed a great interest in continuing their studies. For them, the tradition of quitting their studies and getting married early is not one that is suitable for the current generation.

Concerning their future careers, the female *pesantren* pupils have diverse opinions; nevertheless, the common opinion expressed is that they do not perceive having a career or profession in the public domain *vis-à-vis* domestic ones as conflicting. Within a *pesantren* education, both of those domains are conflated and ambiguous. On the one hand, the pupils are encouraged to think about their future, to study at a higher level, to be independent, to be employed; on the other hand, the materials teach them to concentrate on their domestic and maternal lives, on being caring mothers and good wives to their husbands.[60] The women seem to have negotiated a middle ground where they envision being able to balance the demands of both their private and public duties. To empower the women to make this dream a reality, it is important that

the *pesantren* education provides an educational programme that supports and enhances such a process.

Nyai and Female Pupils of *Pesantren*: Power and Authority

The motivation of those female pupils to be career women or someone who works to serve the community indicates their desire to work in the public domain, while keeping up with domestic duties at home at the same time. One of pupils said that she wants to be like the *nyai* of her *pesantren* in being an active woman. The way she referred to the advice of the *nyai* on having a career outside the household shows the influence of a *nyai* on the female pupils in creating the ideals for their future, as the *nyai* of her *pesantren* was an active one. Within such a segregated and hierarchical environment, the engagement of female pupils will be more with *nyais* than the *kiai*. The *nyai* was a leading figure for the female pupils. The female pupils' communal prayers were led by a *nyai*. In addition, a *nyai* would also set aside time to give the *tausiyah* (religious guidance and counselling) to the female pupils. Some *nyais* were also instructors on particular *kitab kuning*s for their female pupils. On any matter related to the girls within the *pesantren*, the female pupils will talk to the *nyai* first instead of the *kiai*. A *nyai* who managed a well-known *pesantren* for girls with her husband said, "if the pupils have some problems that need to be consulted, it is just the same to talk to either *nyai* or *kiai*..."[61]

However passive the social role of a *nyai* may be, she is usually very much respected by the female pupils and community. A *nyai* is also expected to act as a 'coordinator of religious ceremonies'. Marcoes revealed that "there are many cases of a *nyai* becoming an influential social leader. Quite a few have, in fact, attained great influence and authority in society."[62] In a *pesantren* context, compared to other female teachers (*ustazah*s) who also conduct the instructional process for the pupils, a *nyai* has more power. Although both *nyai* and *ustazah*s teach the [female] pupils, the *nyai*'s influence is stronger because she is a member of the immediate family of the *kiai*. Rosaldo draws on Weber's distinction between power, influence, and authority insofar as it relates to women. In many instances the *nyai* has been given authority by the *kiai*, as well as holding influence and power in her own right.

> It is generally conceded that although women may have no authority in a society, they do not necessarily lack in influence or power. The distinction between power and culturally legitimated authority, between the ability to gain compliance and the recognition that it is right, is crucial to our study of women. An authority

> is in the abstract the right to make a particular decision and to command obedience... power is the ability to act effectively on persons and things, to make secure favourable decisions which are not of right allocated to the individuals of their role.[63]

If authority is defined as the right to make particular decisions and to command obedience, the role of a *nyai* in a *pesantren* discussed in the previous chapters, especially in her relationship with the female pupils, does express such a relationship of authority. Where a *kiai* is a leader of a *pesantren*, then a *nyai* will be his representative in dealing with the female pupils. She often assumes that full authority, particularly in dealing with *pesantren* for girls or female pupils. I remember my interview with one of the *nyais* in Jombang about the process of decision-making in her *pesantren*. She said that basically to talk with a *nyai* about their problems was sufficient for the female pupils; they don't need to talk to a *kiai* again. In her position, a *nyai* will make decisions on matters pertaining to the female pupils, even though formally her husband is the leader of the *pesantren* for girls.

*Nyai*s are generally admired and revered by their pupils. One female pupil from a different *pesantren* told me of her admiration for their *nyais*, due to their qualifications and their wide public activities. *Nyai*s might inspire young female pupils as they consider their ideals and goals for the future. Such an influence is made stronger when a *nyai*, in her capacity as a leader of *pesantren*, has the opportunity to transfer her ideas or her personal experiences. In fact, I know that the *nyais* I discussed in the previous chapters used to do that with their pupils in different ways. The good thing about an active *Nyai* is that her experience deconstructs the ideal portrayal of women's position as conveyed in the *kitab kuning*.

Where a *Nyai* is the sole director of a *pesantren*, as in the case of Nyai Khoiriyah or Nyai Abidah, their power is similar to that of a *kiai* of a *pesantren*. In a situation of collective leadership, as in the current period of *Pesantren* Slafiyah Syafiiyah Seblak under the leadership of Nyai Jamilah's children, the role of a *Nyai* is still significant since all of the committee is perceived to be at the same level. If a *kiai* is sole director of both the *pesantren* for boys and *pesantren* for girls, his wife or his daughter may act as his associate for managing the *pesantren* for girls, or even as a director or manager of a *pesantren* for girls. The degree of 'authority' a *Nyai* may have in the third case might be lower than in the two previous cases. However, as a family member of a *kiai*, she is still in the top position regarding her status. Her perceived power and influence among other women in the *pesantren* are dominant.

Finally, as the leading *pesantren* figures, *nyais* and *kiai*s are a type of 'parents' for their pupils. A *kiai* is also called '*romo*' (the Javanese word

for 'father') by his pupils. A *nyai* might be addressed as [*bu*] *nyai*, or if she is older, she might be addressed as '*mbah nyai*', or some time '*mbah ibu*'. All of these terms imply respect, as well as the close attachment the *santri* and *santriwati* feel, as they use the familial terms. Within the paternal leadership of a *pesantren*, the relationship between the *nyai* and female pupils sometimes resembles a mother and daughter relationship. One of female pupils said, "I was very young when I began to study in this *pesantren*. I knew nothing. For several years now, I have gained many benefits from my study at this *pesantren*. I owe a lot to this *pesantren*. For me, the family of the *kiai* is my family. I don't have a father and mother here. The *kiai* and *nyai* are my parents."[64] Parents sometimes send their daughters at a very early age to the *pesantren*. In the case of young girls sent to *pesantren*, the precise reason behind the decision is unknown, but for the girls the *kiai* and *nyai* were their parents and the other pupils were their sisters. Within the concept of *ibuism*, in which a woman can legitimately overstep and transcend the domestic boundaries, she figured as a 'loving mother', and "this image only can survive where the borderlines of public and private spheres is blurred".[65] The designation also denotes the relationship she has with the pupils, her assumption of responsibility within the *pesantren* and, more broadly, her sense of civic responsibility to the community.

Conclusion

Most of the women's lives within the *pesantren* compound are not publicly known; the physical segregation applied in most *pesantrens* has also contributed to this situation. Due to the physical segregation, women's lives in the *pesantren* have been misunderstood as confined to the private domain of women's world. As in a number of works on *pesantrens*, women's figures, their agency or even their situation or daily life is ignored, unacknowledged and effectively omitted from the *pesantren* world. Initially, I assumed this might only appear in earlier works on *pesantren*, but even in more current and contemporary research this tendency still occurs. In the research that does acknowledge the presence of women in the life and work of the *pesantren*, there is a tendency to persist with the idea that *pesantren* women or *nyais* have weaker agency. My perspective in looking at their agency involves by placing it within their own context of *pesantren* together with the set of patriarchal values that exist in *pesantren* traditions, with some limitations and restrictions applied. With this in mind, their roles and agency look not only different but significant. Comparing those *pesantren* women with men of their *pesantren*, including *kiai*, or comparing them with other women that do not have the similar situation they encountered will only come to the conclusion that their roles are weaker, and insignificant.

The initial access to *pesantren* education for women in Java occurred coincidentally with a general awareness of the significance of education for women at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since then, women have been part of *pesantren* education, as pupils, instructors, or even leaders. Yet, the *pesantren* world still adopts a set of patriarchal values, for instance in the leadership succession; male descendants are almost always prioritised. Besides, the majority of *pesantren* still teach the legacy on gender relations from the *kitab kuning* which has been criticized for its patriarchal notions. Those textbooks also contained the theoretical split between public and private spheres. Some stories and passage of the textbooks identify a split role of women and men in the discussion of marital life. The notion of public men and private women appears significant. Criticism has been voiced by some figures and organisations regarding *pesantrens* for something called "gender bias" that the *pesantren* institution has preserved. Thus, for this reason, some

organisations such as P3M through the *fiqhunnisa'* program, PUAN Amal Hayati, Rahima or NU's women's organisation, Muslimat NU, and Fatayat NU contribute empowerment programs for *pesantren* or *pesantren* women.

In this research I observed *pesantren* women's lives, their agency, and leadership, specifically *nyai*s as main female figures of *pesantren*. An observation on their lives and agency has presented something beyond the "gender bias" limitations as more complexities of gender roles can be understood. Admittedly, although *pesantrens* are attached to religious patriarchal values which emphasize the dichotomy of public and private domains, the life of some *nyais* has indeed illustrated how these dichotomised domains could be 'negotiated'. The lives of *pesantren* women studied in this research have a peculiar socio-religious character, a marriage between local Javanese values and Islamic ones. Some of them assumed power through the process of 'ibuism' (Nieuwenhuis, 1987), where a wife of *kiai* is an '*ibu*' for her *pesantren*, and I call this '*santri ibuism'*, which has roots in the Javanese values of *priyazitation*.

The main case study of this thesis was *Pesantren* Seblak, located in Jombang district, East Java province. From *Pesantren* Seblak, I chose three significant *nyais* from three different generations, beginning with Nyai Khoiriyah, the first generation, Nyai Abidah, the second generation, and Nyai Mahshuna, the third one. All of them have earned public positions, both in *pesantren* affairs and beyond. Those *nyais* and several other *nyais* discussed in this book might not represent the whole pictures of *pesantren* women's lives across the Indonesian Archipelago, or even Java, but because of their pioneering position within their *pesantren*, and perhaps *pesantren* world, it would also make no sense to disregard or overlook their agency. The real experience of women's lives in an institution called a *pesantren* shows a more dynamic gender relationship than a simplistic dichotomy of public and private regardless of the 'patriarchal' character attached to the *pesantrens*. Their intensive engagement in the public space is made possible by several factors. These include their capability and relevant skill or experience as well as the support from their male counterparts (*kiai*s). The notion of maintaining honor and modesty based on the 'Islamic' precepts and *pesantren* values is well preserved by those *pesantren* women. Although the social change wrought by these women may not appear significant in a Western context, in the context of the *pesantren* world of Java, the negotiated move to the public sphere is significant and provides an important role model for future generations.

Notes

Chapter 1

1 Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Modern*, LP3ES, Jakarta, 1986, p. 126.
2 See Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren dan Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia*, Mizan, Bandung, 1995.
3 Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*.
4 Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*, second edition, Penerbit Mutiara, Jakarta, 1979.
5 Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*, p. 25.
6 See Robert W. Hefner, "Introduction: The Politics and Cultures of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia" in Robert W. Hefner (ed.), *Making Modern Muslim: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 2009, p. 17.
7 Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren*, LKIS, Yogyakarta, 2001.
8 See the official website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. www.kemenag.go.id
9 Tim penyusun, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, Balai Pustaka, Jakarta, 1991, p. 499.
10 This is an ideal portrait of a *pesantren*, embodying the concept of introducing the students to the attitude of '*qana'ah*' (feeling satisfied with what they have, satisfaction with one's lot in life).
11 Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup K.H.A. Wahid Hasyim dan Karangan Tersiar*, Panitia Buku Peringatan Alm. K.H.A. Wahid Hasyim, Jakarta, 1957.
12 On a number of occasions in the fieldwork areas in Jombang, I heard some *pesantren* leaders conveying this kind of message. In his formal speech to the pupils and their parents, one *pesantren* leader in the area mentioned that through their life in a *pesantren* a child from wealthy families also learned how to live in a humble, simple environment, very different to the luxurious life s/he has left behind. He also stressed the fact that all of those who study in the *pesantren* are treated equally. On a different occasion, in the course of a formal conversation with a different *pesantren* leader, this statement was repeated. Apparently this impression is considered a constituent part of *pesantren* values.
13 Saifuddin Zuhri, *Guruku Orang-Orang Dari Pesantren*, LkiS, Yogyakarta, 2001,
14 Martin van Bruinessen has discussed the origin of the term *kitab kuning*. He explains that Indonesian Muslim communities use the word *buku* to refer to a book written in Latin script and the word *kitab* for one in Arabic script. Van Bruinessen states that the traditionalist groups rely exclusively on *kitab kuning* in their Islamic learning process. The term *kitab kuning* literally means a yellow book, because at the beginning of the twentieth century these books were actually printed on yellow paper imported from the Middle East. Modernist groups in Indonesia read *kitab putih* or white books, written in the Indonesian language and extolling puritanical interpretations of Islam

which they hope to disseminate among Indonesian Muslim communities. Their ideal contrasts sharply to that of the first group which also accommodates the influence of the local culture and tradition. This situation has led to the negative perceptions of the *kitab putih* in the world of the *pesantren*, and until recently some classical *pesantren* still banned *kitab putih*. See Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*, p. 132.

15 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, Glencoe, Free Press, Ill, 1960.

16 See Greg Barton and Greg Fealy (eds), "Introduction", in *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, Monash Asia Institute, Clayton, 1996, pp. xix-xxvi.

17 See Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, New York, 1973.

18 See *Fajar Kebangunan Ulama: Biografi K.H. Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary*, first edition, LKiS, Yogyakarta, 1999. Greg Barton and Greg Fealy (eds), "Introduction". Slamet Effendi Yusuf, et al., *Dinamika kaum santri: menelusuri jejak & pergolakan internal NU*, Rajawali, Jakarta, 1983. Said Budairy, "K.H. Bisri Syansuri: Tegar dengan Prinsip", *Pesantren*, I, October, December, 1986. Aziz Mashuri, n.d. Al-maghfurlah KH.M. Bishri Syansuri; *Cita-cita dan Pengabdiannya*, al-Ikhlas.

19 Andree Feillard, "Indonesia's Emerging Muslim Feminism: Women Leaders on Equality, Inheritance and other Gender Issues", in *Studia Islamika*, 4, no. 1, 1997, pp. 83-111.

20 See Greg Barton, *Abdurrahman Wahid: Muslim democrat, Indonesian President*, UNSW press, Sydney NSW, 2002. Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup*.

21 Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup*.

22 Under the New Order regime, Harmoko, the Minister of Information in Suharto's cabinet and one of the leaders of Golongan Karya, introduced a programme known as '*safari Ramadan*' (A Ramadan Journey), in which he and his team visited one *pesantren* after another in a campaign to popularise the party and to win support for the development programme of the government.

23 Jane I. Smith, "The Experience of Muslim Women: Consideration of Power and Authority", in John L. Esposito(ed.), *Islam The Straight Path*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998, p. 90.

24 Yvonne Y. Haddad, "Islam, Women and Revolution in Twentieth-Century Arab Thought", in Yvonne Yazbeck and Ellison Banks Findly (eds) *Women, Religion and Social Change*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1985, pp. 275-306.

25 Camilia Fawzi El-Solh and Judy Mabro, "Intoduction: Islam and Muslim Women", in El-Solh, Camilia Fawzi and Judy Mabro (eds), *Muslim Women's Choices: Religious Belief Social Reality*, Berg, Providence, RI, 1994, p. 7.

26 C. Nelson, "Public and Private Politics: Women in the Middle Eastern World", in *American Ethnologist*, 1974, vol. I, no. 3.

27 See for example Amal Rassam, "Women and Domestic Power in Morocco", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1980, No. 12.

28 Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy", *Gender and Society*, 1988, Vol. 2. No. 3, p. 275.

29 Nayereh Tohidi, "Gurdians of the Nation: Women, Islam, and Soviet Legacy of Modernization in Azerbaijan", in Bodman, Herbert L and Nayereah Tohidi (eds), *Women in Muslim Societies: Diversity Within Unity*, Lynne Rienner Publisher, London, 1998, quoted by Valentine Moghadam, "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of The Debate", in Saliba et al. (eds), *Gender, Politics and Islam*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2002, p. 26-27.

30 Lies Marcoes, "The Female Preacher as a Mediator in Religion: A Case Study in Jakarta and West Java", in Van Bemmelen et al. (eds), *Women and Mediation in Indonesia*, KITLV Press, Leiden, 1992, pp. 203-227. Faiqoh, Nyai: *Agen Perubahan di Pesantren*, Kucica, Jakarta, 2003.

31 Eva Evers-Rosander, "Women and Muridsm in Senegal: The case of the Mam Diarra Bousso Daira in Mbacke", in Karin Ask and Marit Tjomsland (eds), *Women and Islamization: Contemporary of Discourse on Gender Relations*, Berg, Oxford and New York, 1998, p. 172.

32 This notion was confirmed during my own fieldwork. In one of the graduation ceremonies at *Pesantren* Madrasatul Quran, the father of the *dux* of the year, *Lulusan Terbaik*, said that the success of his son could be attributed to the *barakah* (the teaching and the blessing) of *Bu Nyai*. Just after the son had begun his studies, his parents came to *Bu Nyai* and said, '*Bu Nyai ini anak saya mohon didoakan*' ("*Bu Nyai*, this is my son, could you please pray for him"). The father repeated this statement several times, emphasising that the power of the *nyai's barakah* had played an important role in his son's achievement. Nevertheless, it should also be recognised that the *nyais* in *pesantren* could do more in terms of their public/political participation than a sufistic female leader such as Soknas Magot Diop could do in her position of inherited *tariqa* leadership.

33 C. Coloun, "Women, Islam and Barakah" in C. Coulon and D. Cruise O' Brien (eds) *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988.

34 Robert A. Fernea and Elizabet W. Fernea, "Variation in Religious Observance among Islamic Women" in Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East Since 1500*, University of California Press, Barkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1972, pp. 385-401.

35 Jane I. Smith, "The Experience..., p. 90.

36 Asma Afsaruddin, "Introduction" in Asma Afsaruddin (ed.) *Hermeneutics and Honor: Negotiating Female "Public" Space in Islamic/ate Societies*, Harvard University Press, Centre for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University, Cambridge etc, 1999, pp. 1-28.

37 Irwan Abdullah, (ed.) *Sangkan Paran Gender*, Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta, 2003, p. 4.

38 Therese Saliba, "Introduction" in Saliba *et al*. (eds), *Gender, Politics and Islam*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2002, p. 4.

39 See, for example, Susan Blackburn, *Women and the state in modern Indonesia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof (eds). "Introduction", in Locher-Scholten and Niehof (eds), *Indonesian Women in Focus: Past and Present Notions*, Foris Publication, Dordrecht-Holland, 1987, pp. 1-9. Van Bemmelen et al. (eds), *Women and Mediation in Indonesia*, KITLV Press, Leiden, 1992. Jane Moning Atkinson and Shelly Errington (eds). *Power and Difference: Gender in Island Southeast Asia*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990.

40 Jane I. Smith, "The Experience..., p. 105.

41 See for example Jutta Berninghausen and Birgit Kerstan, *Forging New Paths: Feminist Social Methodology and Rural Women in Java*, Zed Books, London: Atlantic Highland, NJ, USA, 1992. Norma Sullivan, *Masters and Managers: A Study of Gender Relations in Urban Java*, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards, N.S.W., 1994

42 Daniel, S. Lev, "On the Other Hand?", in Laurie J. Sears (ed.), *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1996, p. 194.

43 Susan Blackburn, *Women and the state*, p. 104.

44 M. Quraish Shihab, "Kodrat Perempuan Versus Normal Kultural" in Lily Zakiyah Munir, *Memposisikan Kodrat*. Mizan, Bandung, 1999, p. 88.

45 *Kalau menjadi kepala negara saja dibolehkan, maka dalam bidang-bidang yang lebih ringan tentu tidak ada masalah, misalnya kerja di luar rumah bagi para perempuan karir.* The translation is mine. Ali Yafie, "Kedudukan, dan Kepemimpinan Perempuan", in Lili Zakiyah Munir, *Memposisikan Kodrat*, Mizan, Bandung, 1999.

46 Jutta Berninghausen and Birgit Kerstan, *Forging New Paths*, p. 30.

47 Hildred Geertz, *The Javanese Family: A Study of Kinship and Socialization*, The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc, USA, 1961. Jayawardena, "Women and Kinship in Acheh Besar, Northen Sumatra", *Ethnology*, Jan., 1977, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 21-38. Jane Moning Atkinson and Shelly Errington (eds), op.cit. Evelyn Suleeman, "Pendidikan Wanita di Indonesia", in T.O. Ihromi (ed.), *Kajian Wanita dalam Pembangunan*, Yayasan Obor Indonesia, Jakarta, 1995. James T. Siegel, *The Rope of God*, University of California Press, Barkley and Los Angeles, 1969.
48 Jayawerdana, "Women and Kinship".
49 See Kathryn Robinson, "Gender Orders in Some Societies of the Indonesian Archipelago", in *Kultur (The Indonesian Journal for Muslim Culture)*, 2002, Volume 2, Number 2, pp. 1-20.
50 Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi*.
51 See Benedict R. Anderson, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture" in Claire Holt (ed.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972, pp. 1-69.
52 See Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Pandangan Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiyai*, LP3ES, Jakarta, 1982. Husein Muhammad, "Pesantren and The Issue of Gender Relation", *Kultur (The Indonesian Journal for Muslim Cultures)*, 2002, Volume 2, Number 2, pages 63-81.
53 Valerie L. Hull, "Women in Java's Rural Middle Class Progress or Regress" in Penny van Esterik, *Women of Southeast Asia*, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, 1996, p. 78.
54 Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, "Gender and Pluralism in Indonesia", in Robert W. Hefner (ed.), *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2001, p. 256.
55 Barbara Hatley, "Theatrical Imagery and Gender Ideology in Java," in Atkinson, Jane Moning and Shelly Errington (eds), *Power and Difference: Gender in Island Southeast Asia*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990, pp. 177-07.
56 Kartini Sjahrir, "Perempuan Intelektual Indonesia: Suatu Pengantar", in Mely G. Tan (ed.), *Perempuan Indonesia Pemimpin Masa Depan?*, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, Jakarta, Third Edition, 1996, p. 25.
57 Barbara Hatley, "Theatrical Imagery... Ward Keeler, "Speaking of Gender in Java" in Atkinson, Jane Monnig and Shelly Errington (eds), *Power and Difference: Gender in Island Southeast Asia*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990, pp. 127-152. Hildred Geertz, *The Javanese Family...* Valerie L. Hull, *Women in Java's Rural*. Jutta Berninghausen and Birgit Kerstan, *Forging New Paths*, Norma Sullivan, Masters and Managers.
58 Suzanne April Brenner, *The Domestication of Desire: Women, Wealth, and Modernity in Java*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey and UK, 1998.
59 Barbara Hatley, "Theatrical Imagery..., p. 180.
60 See, for example, Helen Creese, *Women of the Kakawin World: Marriage and Sexuality in the Indic Courts of Java and Bali*, M. E Sharpe, New York and England, 2004. Nancy K. Florida, Sex Wars: Writing Gender Relations in Nineteenth-Century Java, in Jane L. Sears (ed.), *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1996.
61 Ward Keeler, "Speaking of Gender in Java", p. 130.
62 Barbara Hatley, "Theatrical Imagery...", p. 181.
63 Hildred Geertz, *The Javanese Family*.
64 Norma Sullivan, *Masters and Managers*.
65 Ward Keeler, "Speaking of Gender in Java", p. 129.
66 Benedict R. Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Culture in Indonesia*, Ithaca New York, etc: Cornell University Press, 1990

67 Madelon Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis, Ibuism and Priyayization: Path to Power?, in Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof (eds), *Indonesian Women in Focus: Past and Present Notions*, Floris Publications, Dordrecht-Holland, 1987, pp. 43-51.
68 Suzanne April Brenner, *The Domestication of Desire*, p. 26.
69 Madelon Djajadingrat-Nieuwenhuis, *Ibuism and Priyayization*.
70 Ward Keeler, "Speaking of Gender in Java", p. 141.
71 *Ibid*, p. 133.
72 Barbara Hatley, "Theatrical Imagery...", p. 184.
73 I discuss this issue in more detail in the next chapter.
74 See for instance Lila Abu-Lughod, (ed.), *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, Princeton New Jersey: Princenton University Press, 1998. Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, Bloominton and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1985. Deniz Kandiyoti, *Gendering the Middle East: Emerging Perspectives*, London and New York: IB Tauris Publisher, 1996. Moghadam, Valentine, *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*, Boulder, CO: L. Rienner, 1993. Haleh Afshar, *Islam and Feminism: an Iranian Case Study*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
75 See for instance Shahida Lateef, *Muslim Women in India: Political and Private Realities*, London and New Jersey: Zed Book Ltd, 1990. Gail, Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
76 Haideh Moghissi, 2005. *Women and Islam: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, Routledge, London and New York, 2005.
77 See, for example, Susan Blackburn *et al*. (eds) *Indonesian Islam in New Era: How Women Negotiate Their Muslim Identities*, Clayton: Monash University Press, 1998. Pieternella van Doorn-Harder, Women Shaping Islam: Indonesian Women Reading the Qur'an, Urbana Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2006.
78 Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*, Oxford University Press, Singapore etc, 1989.
79 Some earlier versions of my doctoral thesis have been published in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* in 2007, discussing women and *pesantren* education in Indonesia, focusing on the life of female *pesantren* students and the chapter on "Negotiating Public Space: Three Generations of *Nyai*s in a Jombang Pesantren" in a book entitled, *Indonesian Islam in New Era: How Women Negotiate Their Muslim Identity*, published by Monash University Press in 2008, and "Pesantren Seblak of Jombang, East Java: women's educational leadership" published in *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* in 2008. In 2009, Bianca J. Smith and Saipul Hamdi published an article on "The Politics of Female Leadership, in Nahdlatul Wathan Pesantren, Lombok Eastern Indonesia" in *International Journal of Pesantren Studies*.
80 The term actor refers to the use of the term mentioned by Mastuhu in his book on *Dinamika Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren* (the dynamics of the *pesantren* educational system). In his definition of *pesantren* elements, the first is the 'actor', which includes the people who are engaged in the educational process of a *pesantren*, such as *kiai*, teachers, staff, as well as students. Mastuhu, *Dinamika Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren: Suatu Kajian tentang Unsur dan Nilai Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren*, INIS, Jakarta, 1994.
81 See, for example, Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren*. Dawam Rahardjo, *Pergulatan Dunia Pesantren: Membangun dari Bawah*, P3M, Jakarta, 1985. Sukamto, *Kepemimpinan Kiai dalam Pesantren*, LP3ES, Jakarta, 1999. Manfred Oepen and Wolfgang Karcher (eds), *The impact of Pesantren in Education and Community Development in Indonesia*, Technical Unversity Berlin, Jakarta: Friedrich Naumann Stiftung: Indonesian Societry for Pesantren and Community Development 9P3M), 1998. Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi*. Scott Allen Buresh, *Pesantren-based*

Development: Islam,Education, and Economic Development in Indonesia, UMI, Ann Arbor, MI, 2003.

82 See Husein Muhammad, "Pesantren and the Issue".

83 For instance see George Makdisi, *The rise of colleges: institutions of learning in Islam and the West*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1981.

84 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren*.

85 *Kiai* is a term used for a *pesantren* leader who is also in most instances a religious leader. This term is specifically reserved for a male *pesantren* leader. If a woman becomes a *pesantren* leader, she will not be addressed as '*kiai*' but as *nyai* – the title she has already gained as an immediate family member of a *kiai*, regardless of whether she is a formal *pesantren* leader or not.

86 See Lies Marcoes, "The Female Preacher".

87 Tim Penyusun, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, p. 695.

88 Madelon Djajadininggrat-Nieuwenhuis, *Ibuism and Priyayization...*, p. 43-51.

89 *Ibid*, p. 44.

90 In *pesantren* tradition, sometimes *kiai* are called '*romo*' or '*romo kiai*', which in Javanese means 'father' (as one of the parents). In the *dayah* tradition, *teungku* are usually called '*abu/abon*' or '*waled*', all Arabic words for father. A *teungku*'s wife is addressed as *umi*, which means 'mother' in Arabic. This is one of the indications that both *pesantren* and *dayah* apply the concept of family in their education system, in which the leaders or managers are seen as the figurative parents of the students.

91 Lies Marcoes, "The Female Preacher".

92 Such as Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Perempuan di antara Lembaran Kitab Kuning", in Lies Marcoes and Johan Hendrik Meuleman (eds),*Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual*, INIS, Jakarta, 1993, pp. 155-163. Husein Muhammad, "Kajian Atas Kitab Uqud al-Lujain", *Tashwirul Afkar*, 1999, no. 5. pp. 94-100.

93 Susan Blackburn, *Women and the state*. Maila Stivens, "Theorising Gender, Power and Modernity in Affluent Asia" in Khrisna Sen and Maila Stivens (eds), in *Women in Affluent Asia*, Routledge, London etc, 1998, pp. 1-34. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof (eds), *Introduction*. Sita van Bemmelen, "Jender dan Pembangunan: Apakah yang Baru?", in T.O. Ihromi, (ed.), *Kajian Wanita dalam Pembangunan*, Yayasan Obor Indonesia, Jakarta, 1995, pp. 175-226.

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95 See, for example, Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Perempuan di antara". Husein Muhammad, "Kajian Atas Kitab". Sinta Nuriyah-A. Wahid, *et al.*, *Wajah Baru Relasi Suami Istri: Telaah Kitab 'Uqûd al-Lujjayn*, LKIS, Yogyakarta, 2001.

96 See, for example, Masdar F. Mas'udi, "*Perempuan di antara...*".

97 Sinta Nuriyah-A. Wahid, *et al.*, *Wajah Baru Relasi Suami Istri*. Husein Muhammad, "Kajian Atas Kitab".

98 Susan Blackburn, *Women and the state*, p. 33.

99 Lila Dubee, *Women and kinship: comparative perspectives on gender in South and South-East Asia*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 1997, p. 150.

100 Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin," Gender and Pluralism"

101 Budi Rajab, "Pendidikan Sekolah dan Perubahan Kedudukan Perempuan", in *Jurnal Perempuan*, May, 2002, p. 27.

102 Saya Sasaki Shiraishi, *Young Heroes; The Indonesian Family in Politics*, Cornell University, Ithaca New York, 1997.

103 Achmad Muthaliin, *Bias Gender dalam Pendidikan*, first edition, Muhammadiyah University Press, Surakarta, 2001, p. 215.

104 Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil*.

105 Evelyn Suleeman, "Pendidikan Wanita di Indonesia", p. 239.

106 Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*.
107 Mustofa Bisri, "Ini *'Uqûd al-Lujjayn* Baru: Ini Baru *'Uqûd al-Lujjayn*", in Sinta Nuriyah A.Wahid et al, *Wajah Baru Relasi Suami Istri: Telaah Kitab 'Uqûd al-Lujjayn*, LKIS, Yogyakarta, 2001, pp. ix-xi.
108 See Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Perempuan di antara". Siti Musdah Mulia, *Muslimah Reformis*, Mizan, Bandung, 2004. Husein Muhammad, "Kajian Atas Kitab". Husein Muhammad, "Pesantren and The Issue".
109 This NGO focuses on the issue of *pesantren* and women's empowerment.
110 See, for example, Husein Muhammad, "Pesantren and The Issue". Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Perempuan di antara". Sinta Nuriyah-A. Wahid, *et al*., *Wajah Baru Relasi Suami Istri*.
111 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi pesantren*.

Chapter 2

1 See Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post Colonial Indonesia: Gender and Nation in a new Democracy*, Routledge Curzon, London and New York, 2005. Sukanti Suryochondro, 2000, "The development of Women's Movement in Indonesia", in Mayling Oey Gardiner and Carla Bianpoen (eds), *Indonesian Women: The Journey Continues*, ANU, Canberra, 2005, pp. 224, 243. Anita Rahman, "Moslem Women's Organisations: Their Role in Attaining the Benefits of Development", in Gardiner, Mayling Oey and Carla Bianpoen (eds), *Indonesian Women: The Journey Continues*, ANU, Canberra, 2000.
2 See Susan Blackburn, *Women and the state in modern Indonesia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004.
3 Lee Kam Hing, *Education and Politics in Indonesia 1945-1965*, University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1995.
4 Daniel, S. Lev, "On the Other Hand?", in Laurie J. Sears (ed.), *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1996, pp. 191-206.
5 Aisla Zainuddin, "Education in the Netherlands East Indies and The Republic of Indonesia", in R.J.W. Selleck (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton Victoria, 1970, pp. 17-83.
6 Lee Kam Hing, *Education and Politics...*, p. 16.
7 Saya Sasaki Shiraishi, *Young Heroes; The Indonesian Family in Politics*, Cornell University, Ithaca New York, 1997.
8 The data on the initial efforts to establish the *pesantren* for girls in Jombang can be found in the biography of Kiai Bisry Syansury. During my interviews with some informants in Jombang, some of them born during the 1920s said that they had studied there, since other *pesantrens* like *Pesantren* Tebuireng, *Pesantren* Seblak and other *pesantrens* in the regions accepted no female pupils.
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10 Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, New York, 1973.
11 Taufik Abdullah, 1993, "Kilasan Sejarah Pergerakan Wanita Islam di Indonesia" in Lies Marcoes and Johan Hendrik Meuleman (eds),*Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual*, Jakarta: INIS, Jakarta, p. 80.
12 Zamzami Kimin, "Sekelumit Kenang-Kenangan Terhadap Aktivitas Mendiang Kak Rahmah El-Yunisiyah (1900-1969)", in Anonymous, Ghalia Indonesia, Jakarta, 1979. n.d. *Peringatan 55 Tahun Diniyah Putri Padang*, p. 228.

13 A great Muslim scholar.
14 Taufik Abdullah, "Modernization in the Minangkabau World: West Sumatra in the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century" in Claire Holt (ed), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1972, pp. 179-245.
15 Lee Kam Hing, *Education and Politics...*, p. 39.
16 Jajang Jahroni, "Haji rangkayo Rasuna Said:Pejuan Politik dan Penulis Pergerakan", in Jajat Burhanuddin, *Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 2002, pp. 68-99.
17 Lee Kam Hing, *Education and Politics*.
18 Mayling Oey Gardiner and Sulastri, "Continuity, Change and Women in a Man's World", in Mayling Oey Gardiner and Carla Bianpoen (eds), *Indonesian Women: The Journey Continues,* Canberra: ANU, Canberra, 2000, pp. 1-23.
19 See Azyumardi Azra, *Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisional dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi*, Logos, Jakarta, 2003.
20 Azyumardi Azra, *Surau: Pendidikan Islam*, p. 143.
21 Baihaqi AK, *Ulama dan Madrasah di Aceh*, Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia bekerja sama dengan Departemen Agama, Jakarta, 1976.
22 The students from other educational institutions (not *pesantren*) are called *murid* or *pelajar* in *Bahasa Indonesia*.
23 In the *pesantren* world, the term *pondok* also specifically refers to boarding houses, the accommodation for the live-in students.
24 The term '*pondok*' meaning a traditional school is widely used in the Malay or Pattani Muslim community of southern part of Thailand.
25 Traditional here is not necessarily something in contradiction to modern. The term describes the characteristic of a *pesantren* which existed several centuries ago in Indonesian history. Mastuhu, *Dinamika Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren : Suatu Kajian tentang Unsur dan Nilai Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren,* INIS, Jakarta, 1994.
26 B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1971, p. 113.
27 See Sunarwoto, *The Influence of Meccan Education on the Pesantren Tradition*, unpublished MA thesis, University Leiden, 2008. Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren dan Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia*, Mizan, Bandung, 1995.
28 Mastuhu, *Dinamika Sistem*.
29 C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the latter part of the 19th century: daily life, customs and learning of the Muslims of the East-Indian archipelago,* translated by J. H. Monahan, Brill, Leiden, 1970.
30 *Ibid*.
31 Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulam' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,* Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, N.S.W., 2004.
32 Mastuhu, *Dinamika Sistem*.
33 James L. Peacock, *Indonesia: An Antrhopological Perspective*, Goodyear Pub. Co, Pacific Palisades, Calif, 1973.
34 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java,* Glencoe, Free Press, Ill., 1960.
35 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, p. 177.
36 See for example Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiyai*, Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial, Jakarta, 1982. Dawam Rahardjo, *Pergulatan Dunia Pesantren:Membangun dari Bawah*, P3M, Jakarta, 1985. Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Modern,* LP3ES, Jakarta, 1986. Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren,* LKIS, Yogyakarta, 2001.

37 Abdurrahman Wahid, "Principles of Pesantren Education", in Manfred Oepen and Wolfgang Karcher (eds), *The impact of Pesantren in Education and Community Development in Indonesia,* Technical Unversity Berlin, Jakarta: Friedrich Naumann Stiftung: Indonesian Societry for Pesantren and Community Development (P3M), 1988, p. 197.

38 *Lingkungan pesantren pada umumnya terdiri dari rumah kiai, sebuah tempat peribadatan yang juga berfungsi sebagai t enpat Pendidikan (disebut mesjid kalau digunakan untuk sholat Jumat, kalau tidak: disebut langgar atau surau), sebuah atau lebih rumah pondokan yang dibuat oleh para santri dari bamboo atau kayu, sebuah atau lebih ruangan untuk memasak, kolam atau ruangan untuk mandi atau berwudhu*. The translation is mine. Karel A. Steenbrink, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

39 Some *pesantren* have evolved from a single-man leadership to a collective leadership or managerial board.

40 *Pesantren* pupils.

41 Wolfgang Karcher, 1988, "Pesantren and Government Schools – How Do They Fit Together?", in Manfred Oepen and Wolfgang Karcher (eds), *The impact of Pesantren in Education and Community Development in Indonesia,* Technical Unversity Berlin, Jakarta: Friedrich Naumann Stiftung: Indonesian Societry for Pesantren and Community Development (P3M), 1998, p. 187.

42 Mastuhu, 1998, "Principles of Education in Pesantren" in Manfred Oepen and Wolfgang Karcher, (eds), *The impact of Pesantren in Education and Community Development in Indonesia,* Technical University Berlin, Jakarta: Friedrich Naumann Stiftung: Indonesian Society for Pesantren and Community Development P3M), 1998, p. 208.

43 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*.

44 Most people, particularly those belonging to the *wong cilik*, use *Bahasa Jawa ngoko*, the language of the lower class people in Java. *Bahasa Jawa halus* is commonly used among the aristocratic families, and it is rather more complicated than *Bahasa Jawa ngoko*. Surprisingly, one female pupil who spoke fluently to a *nyai* in *Bahasa Jawa halus* was not Javanese. She came from Riau province in Sumatra. Riau culture and tradition is close to the Malay culture, as is their local language.

45 Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*, p. 18.

46 Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning.*

47 *Ibid.*

48 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren.*, p. 56.

49 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*.

50 Hiroko Horikoshi, 1982, *Kyai and Perubahan Sosial*, P3M, Jakarta, 1982.

51 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren*.

52 Saya Sasaki Shiraishi, *Young Heroes...*, p. 88.

53 See Sylva Frisk, *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*, NIAS Press: Denmark, 2009.

54 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*.

55 Susan Blackburn, *Women and the state.*

56 Susan Blackburn, *Women and the state*, p. 148.

57 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof (eds). "Introduction", in Locher-Scholten and Niehof (eds), *Indonesian Women in Focus: Past and Present Notions,* Foris Publication, Dordrecht-Holland, 1987, p. 7.

58 Madelon Nieuwenhuis, Ibuism and Priyayization: Path to Power?, in Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof (eds), *Indonesian Women in Focus: Past and Present Notions,* Foris Publication, Dordrecht-Holland, 1987, p. 44.

59 Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, "Gender and Pluralism in Indonesia", in Robert W. Hefner (ed.), *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia,* University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2000, pp. 253-267.
60 Saya Sasaki Shiraishi, *Young Heroes...*, p. 166.
61 Buku Peringatan, 1958: 110, as cited by Susan Blackburn, *Women and the state*, p. 148.
62 Saya Sasaki Shiraishi, *Young Heroes...*, p. 11.
63 Laurie J. Sears, "Introduction: Fragile Identities", in Laurie J. Sears (ed.), *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1996, p. 19.
64 *Ibid.*
65 Kartini Sjahrir, "Perempuan Intelektual Indonesia: Suatu Pengantar", in Mely G. Tan (ed.), *Perempuan Indonesia Pemimpin Masa Depan?*, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, Jakarta, Third Edition, 1996, p. 26.
66 Julia I. Suryakusuma, "The State and Sexuality in New Order Indonesia", in Laurie J. Sears (ed.), *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1996, p. 102.
67 Kathryn Robinson, "Gender Orders in Some Societies of the Indonesian Archipelago", in *Kultur (The Indonesian Journal for Muslim Culture)*, 2002, Volume 2, Number 2, pp. 1-20.
68 Cited by Sylvia Tiwon, "Models and Maniacs: Articulating the Female in Indonesia", in Jane L. Sears (ed), *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1996.
69 Mayling Oey Gardiner and Sulastri, "Continuity, Change and Women..., p. 21.
70 See Melani Budianta, "Suara Ibu Peduli: Panggilan Nurani Warga", *Jurnal Perempuan*, Jakarta: Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan, 1999, pp. 2-6.
71 Gadis Arivia, "Politik Susu" Pendobrakan Bidang Politik", *Jurnal Perempuan*, Jakarta: Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan,1999, p. 7.
72 Melani Budianta, "Suara Ibu Peduli", p. 4
73 Rochayah Machali, "Women and the Concept of Power in Indonesia", in Susan Blackburn (ed.), *Love, Sex, and Power*, Clayton: Asia Monash Institute, 2001, p. 13.
74 *Ibid.*
75 Ward Keeler, "Speaking of Gender in Java" in Atkinson, Jane Moning and Shelly Errington (eds), *Power and Difference: Gender in Island Southeast Asia*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990, p. 144.
76 Tim penyusun, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1991, p.695.
77 Lies Marcoes, "The Female Preacher as a Mediator in Religion: A Case Study in Jakarta and West Java", in Van Bemmelen *et al.* (eds), *Women and Mediation in Indonesia*, KITLV Press, Leiden, 1992.
78 Madelon Djajadiningrat - Nieuwenhuis, Ibuism and Priyayization.
79 *Ibid*, p. 44.
80 Lies Marcoes, "The Female Preacher",
81 Some *kiai*s give their daughters' education priority, not only in religious matters, but also their general education. The children of *kiai*s are usually among the educated people in their community. The social privileges and the economic resources of a *kiai* will also assist his children to attain a better, more advanced education.
82 Lies Marcoes, "The Female Preacher".
83 Faiqoh, *Nyai: Agen Perubahan di Pesantren*, Kucica, Jakarta, 2003.
84 *Ibid.*
85 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren.*
86 The term '*santri ibuism*' has not been used before in combination in the literature.
87 I shall refer to a *nyai* in her position as a *pesantren* leader with a capital letter '*Nyai*', to make a distinction between the general *nyai* who owes her status to being the wife of a *kiai*, without necessarily being related to the leadership position.

88 Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*, p. 18.
89 Bianca J. Smith and Saipul Hamdi published an article on "The Politics of female Leadership, in Nahdlatu Wathan Pesantren", Lombok Eastern Indonesia in *International Journal of Pesantren Studies* Vol. 3, Number 1, 2009, pp. 1-28.
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91 Musdah Mulia, *Muslimah Reformis*, Mizan, Bandung, 2004, p. 102.
92 Sabine A.M. Kuyper, "Profil Organisasi Wanita Islam Indonesia" in Lies Marcoes and Johan Hendrik Meuleman (eds),*Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual*, INIS, Jakarta, 1993.
93 Robin L. Bush, "Wacana Perempuan di Lingkungan NU: Sebuah Perdebatan Mencari Bentuk", *Tashwirul Afkar*, 1999, no. 5, pp. 24-33.
94 Anik Farida, "Wacana Gender di Pesantren", in *Penamas (Penelitian Agama Kemasyarakatan)*, 2004, Volume XVII No. 1, pp. 20-35.
95 Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Perempuan di antara".
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99 Aisyah Hamid Baidlowi, "Profil Organisasi Wanita Islam: Studi Kasus Muslimat NU", in Lies Marcoes and Johan Hendrik Meuleman (eds),*Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual*, INIS, Jakarta, 1993.
100 Saliba Therese, *et al.* (eds), *Gender, Politics and Islam*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2002, pp. 1-13.
101 See Andree Feillard, "Potensi Perubahan Relasi Gender di Lingkungan Umat Islam: Sebuah Proyeksi dan Pemaparan Data", in Syafiq Hasyim (ed.), *Menakar Harga Perempuan*, Mizan, Bandung, 1999, pp. 221-241.
102 Greg Barton and Greg Fealy (eds), "Introduction", in *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, Monash Asia Institute, Clayton, 1996, pp. xix-xxvi.
103 Aisyah Hamid Baidlowi, "Profil Organisasi Wanita Islam..., p. 84.
104 Ismatu Ropi and Jamhari, *Citra perempuan dalam Islam : pandangan ormas keagamaan*, Gramedia Pustaka Utama bekerjasama dengan PPIM-UIN Jakarta dan The Ford Foundation, Jakarta, 2003, p. 21.
105 Aisyah Hamid Baidlowi, "Profil Organisasi Wanita Islam..., p. 85.
106 *Ibid*, p. 84.
107 Anita Rahman, "Moslem Women's Organisations ..., p. 266.
108 Aisyah Hamid Baidlowi, "Profil Organisasi Wanita Islam..., p. 85.
109 *Ibid*, p. 87.
110 *Ibid*.
111 An expert on *fiqh* matters.
112 Religious legal thought or interpretation.
113 Said Aqiel Siradj *Islam kebangsaan: fiqih demokratik kaum santri*, Pustaka Ciganjur, Jakarta, 1999,p. 22
114 Andree Feillard, "Potensi Perubahan Relasi Gender".

115 *Ibid*, p. 224.
116 Djohan Effendi, *A Renewal Without Breaking Tradition: The Emergence of a New Discourse in Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama during the Abdurrahman Wahid Era*, Interfidei, Yogyakarta, 2008, p. xxxiii.
117 Ismatu Ropi and Jamhari, *Citra perempuan dalam Islam*..., p. 38.
118 Robin L. Bush, "Wacana Perempuan di Lingkungan NU..., p. 32.
119 Lies Marcoes, "Women's Grassroots Movements in Indonesia: A Case Study of the PKK and Islamic Women's Organisation", in Kathryn Robinson and Sharon Bessel (eds), *Women in Indonesia: Gender, Equity and Development*, Singapore: Institute of South east Asia Studies, Singapore, 2001, pp.188-197.
120 Zainab, Siti, *Nyai, Kiai dan Pesantren*, Yayasan Kesejahteraan Fatayat, Yogyakarta, 2001.
121 Lies Marcoes, "Mencoba Mencari Titik Temu Islam dan Hak Reproduksi Perempuan", in Syafiq Hasyim (ed.), *Menakar Harga Perempuan*, Mizan, Bandung, 1999, pp. 15-21.
122 The women's section of P3M (the Centre for *Pesantren* and Community Development) co-operated with some *pesantrens* in setting up workshops and trainings on gender in *pesantren*.
123 Nyai Noer Cholida from Pesantren Purwoasri in Kediri, East Java, told me that her *pesantren* had been the host for the gender socialisation training of *Fiqhunnisa*' P3M.
124 Ismatu Ropi and Jamhari, *Citra perempuan dalam Islam*..., p. 39.
125 The director of PUAN, Sinta Nuriyah A. Wahid, was awarded the "highest honour award" from Soka University Tokyo for her efforts in defending the rights of and justice for women.
126 I shall discuss the establishment of Cepdes more elaborately in the next chapter (Chapter Three) in the section of *Pesantren* Seblak.

Chapter 3

1 Some parts of this chapter have been published in *Review of Indonesia and Malaysian Affairs*, vol. 42, No. 1, 2008.
2 Jombang is the name of the district, and the name of the sub-district as well of the capital city of Jombang (see the map of Jombang).
3 Summary EMIS Departemen Agama, 2001-02, p. 4.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 1.
5 Interview with the staff of EMIS Depag (Department of Religious Affairs), who were charged for arranging the statistical data of *pesantren* on January 7, 2003 in Jakarta.
6 These four *pesantrens* are very popular and influential among Nahdlatul Ulama communities.
7 EMIS Departeman Agama 2003-2004.
8 Rekap Pendataan, 2003.
9 Rekap Pendataan, 2004.
10 See Rekap Pendataan, 2003 and 2004.
11 Kabupaten Jombang dalam Angka, 2002: xii.
12 *Ibid.*, xvii.
13 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiyai*, LP3ES, Jakarta, 1982. Saifuddin Zuhri, 2001, *Guruku Orang-Orang Dari Pesantren*, Yogyakarta, 2001.
14 Compared to other sub-districts, Gudo, for instance, has only one *pesantren*, or Bandar Kedungmulyo with four *pesantrens*, or Kecamatan Perak which has twelve *pesantrens*. See Rekap Pendataan, 2003.

15 The educational system in Indonesia does not recognise the *pesantren* certificate for the purpose of pursuing further study in the formal schooling system, including tertiary education. This means that the pupils should also have a certificate from formal schooling institutions with the curriculum outlined by either the Ministry of Religious Affairs or the Ministry of National Education, apart from their *pesantren* education.

16 The great days celebrated after Ramadan fasting time. Within the Indonesian Muslim community, these days are also associated with the particular tradition of *mudik* (return back home), special food and special tradition of visiting each other.

17 See Lies Marcoes, "The Female Preacher as a Mediator in Religion: A Case Study in Jakarta and West Java", in Van Bemmelen *et al.* (eds), *Women and Mediation in Indonesia*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 1992.

18 In some areas in Java, the practice of child marriage is still common.

19 Interview on October 3, 2003 in Jombang.

20 This is in comparison to the normal conditions of *pondoks* in general and the *pondok* of male pupils at the same time. For their bathroom facilities, there were showers with beautiful ceramic tiles. Their rooms were large enough with modern and artistic ceramic floors. According to one of the *kiai*'s immediate family, the construction of the building cost a lot of money until it was finally finished in 2003.

21 A title that signifies charisma and dignity.

22 Saifuddin Zuhri, 2001, *Guruku Orang...* p. 126.

23 I found one article written by Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary in a magazine, namely *Soeara Moeslimin Indonesia*, no date of publication, but it seems to have been published in the 1940s before Indonesian independence, the article was entitled "*Keutamaan Bercocok Tanam*" (the significance of land cultivation). Although in most references on his figure, it was rarely recorded that he was a farmer, as the Gunseikabu did, the article he published in the magazine will more or less identify his interest in the agriculture sector.

24 See Gunseikanbu, *Orang Indonesia Yang Terkemuka di Jawa*, Gadjah Mada University Press, Yogyakarta, 1986, p. 435.

25 Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup K.H.A. Wahid Hasyim dan Karangan Tersiar*, Panitia Buku Peringatan Alm. K.H.A Wahid Hasyim, Jakarta, 1957,p. 61.

26 The original location of the *pesantren* established by Kiai Asy'ary's family is still preserved, the *pesantren* itself was run by his descendant. Nevertheless, currently the *pesantren* is not well-known by non-local people as *Pesantren* Tebuireng. In my visit to the *pesantren*, the *kiai*'s family said that only eight pupils live in the *pesantren* while the others are local pupils who come to learn Islamic sciences and return home afterwards. The original buildings from Kiai Asy'ary's period are still maintained, it was not far from the current location of the *pesantren*, within a quiet location with a small building resembling a mosque, where the graves of Kiai Asy'ary and his wife are located.

27 Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, p. 55.

28 He was born in Bangkalan Madura in 1819 into a *kiai* family in Madura. He studied in at least four *pesantrens* in Java and Madura before departing to Mecca for further education as well as the ritual of pilgrimage. He was recorded as one of the pupils of Syaikh Nawâwî al-Bantanî's (a celebrated *ulama* in Mecca who came from Java). Kiai Cholil Bangkalan was the master of several founding fathers of the *pesantren* in Java. Apart from Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary (founding father of Pesantren Tebuireng), there were Kiai Manaf Abd Karim (the founding father of Pesantren Lirboyo Kediri), Kiai Wahab Chasbullah (the leading *kiai* of Pesantren Tambak Beras Jombang), Kiai Bisri Syansury (the founding father of Pesantren Denanyar Jombang), Kiai Maksum (the

founding father of Pesantren Lasem, Rembang). He was among the most charismatic *ulama* figures in Indonesia at the end of nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. When the NU was founded, Hasyim Asy'ary also sought for his 'approval' to support the idea. See Abdurrahman Mas'ud, *Intelektual Pesantren: Perhelatan Agama dan Tradisi*, LKIS, Yogyakarta, 2004, pp. 157-176.

29 Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*, Hidakarya Agung, Jakarta, 1984, p. 234.

30 The *ulama*s who originally came from the Indonesian Archipelago.

31 He was born in Tremas, Pacitan, East Java, in 1868. When he was about six years old, his father took him to Mecca. By the end of 1870s, Machfudz returned to Indonesia, his father sent him to the *pesantren* of Kiai Saleh Darat in Semarang Central Java. Few years later, he decided to travel to Mecca again and never returned to Indonesia, passing away in Mecca in 1919. During his second time in Mecca, Machfudz was known as the master for several pupils coming from Southeast Asia, and particularly from Java. He was an industrious *ulama*, at least twenty of his works have been discovered by his descendants. Like Cholil al-Bangkalan, he was also a master for a great number of *kiai*s in Java and Madura. See Abdurrahman Mas'ud, *Intellektual Pesantren: Perhelatan Agama dan Tradisi*, LKIS, Yogyakarta, 2004, pp. 135-156.

32 For the detail of Nawawi al-Bantani's biography, refer to the previous chapter on the author of *Uqûd al-Lujjayn*.

33 Ahmad Khatib was born in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra in 1855. He went to Mecca, married a local woman and lived there for the rest of his life. He was appointed as an *imam* (leader) for the Safi'ite school of al-Haram mosque in Mecca. He was an instructor for some *ulama*s from the Archipelago, and Kiai Ahmad Dahlan, Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary were among his pupils. Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, New York, 1973, p. 38.

34 Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup*. p. 103.

35 *Kiai Bisri membuka kelas khusus untuk santri-santri wanita , sesuatu yang belum pernah terjadi saat itu di dunia pesantren. Putri-putri tetangga dikumpulkan di belakang rumahnya untuk diajar mengaji. Langkah yang asing itu tidak luput dari pengamatan gurunya, Kiai Hasyim yang pada suatu hari memerlukandatang untuk melihat dengan mata kepala. Kiai Bisri tetap melanjutkan percobaannya itu, meskipun tidka izin specific dari gurunya, yang juga tidak melarangnya.Ketetapan hatinya agaknya merupakan perubahan besa pada Kiai Bisri. Sebelum itu tidak pernah melangkah apapun tanpa perkenan guru yang ditundukinya, sebagaimana kasus keengganannya untuk melibatkan diir dalam Syarikat Islam cabang Mekah. Bisa jadi, pembukaan kelas santri wanita telah terjadi perubahan pada diri Kiai Bisri sebagai buah kematangan sikap...* The translation is mine. Said Budairy, "K.H. Bisri Syansuri: Tegar dengan Prinsip", *Pesantren*, I, October-December, 1986, p. 61.

36 See Kyai Abd. Aziz Masyhuri, "In Memorian KH.M. Bisri Syansuri Pendiri Pondok Pesantren Mamba'ul Maarif dan Pendiri NU yang Terakhir Wafatnya", *Risalah Akhir Sanah Pondok Pesantren Mamba'ul Ma'arif Denanyar Jombang*, p. 7, n.d.

37 The fact that women are not encouraged to learn or few people believed that it was *haram* (religiously prohibited) was also mentioned by Nyai Abidah from Pesantren Seblak in the interview, referring to the case of women in her time.

38 Actually, Kwaron has four *pesantrens* instead of three; a new *pesantren* was established in 2003, namely al-Aqobah located not far from the campus of *pesantren* Seblak. Al-Aqobah also has a *majelis taklim* for local women, which is coordinated by the director of the *pesantren*. The educational system applied in that *pesantren* is different from those of the other three *pesantrens* in the area. Al-Aqobah stresses providing modern facilities, methods and system of education, although at the same time, the *pesantren* has adopted some traditional *pesantren* values.

39 Interview on October 2, 2003, in Jombang.
40 Kiai Maksum Ali was born in 1895, in Maskunambang Gresik. Kiai Maksum Ali was famous for his ability in astronomy, astrology, and mathematics. He wrote several books on Arabic grammatical rules, astrology, astronomy and mathematics. One of his books on Arabic grammatical rules, entitled *al-Amtsilât al-Taṣrifiyyah*, was still widely used as the textbook in some *pesantrens* and *madrasah*s across Indonesia until recently. For further information on the figure of Kiai Maksum Ali, see Maksoem Mackfoedz, 1986, "K.H. Ma'sum Ali Cendekiawan Muslim", *Tebuireng*, pp. 5-8.
41 There are two versions regarding the leadership of the *pesantren* after Kiai Maksum Ali's period. In a small note about *Pesantren* Salafiyah Seblak, based on Kiai Machfudz Anwar's and Nyai Abidah's story, the leadership of the *pesantren* after 1933 was taken over by the couple, but the version of *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafiiyah claimed that the leadership of *Pesantren* Seblak after Kiai Maksum Ali's period was taken over by his wife, Nyai Khairiyah, until 1938, when she married for the second time, and then followed her husband to live in Mecca for nineteen years. Obviously, the second version, that it was Nyai Khoiriyah who took over the leadership of the *pesantren* after Kiai Maksum's period, dominates the discourse.
42 Traditional transportation, which is pulled by horse[s].
43 Lily Zakiyah Munir was born in 1950; she has an English educational background for her bachelor's degree, and did her master's degree in Holland.
44 Interview with Lily Zakiyah Munir in Jakarta on July 15, 2003. *P3M sekarang ada program Islam emansipatoris, jaringan Islam emansipatoris itu intinya adalah mendekonstruksi paradigma memahami agama berangkat dari realita, nah ini mirip juga kita di Cep Des akan merancang program semacam itu, yang kita sebut adalah Islam transformatif, Islam transformatif ini kita mulai kecil-kecilan ya metoda memahami agama; Quran dan Hadist, tidak normative tapi berdasarkan realita, jadi caranya melalui diskusi-diskusi'Bahsul Masail'*. The translation is mine.
45 Literally means a discussion on several issues or problems. It is a discussion on religious matters attended by *kiai*s or *ulama*s to produce a religious legal interpretation and a recommendation from the Islamic perspective on particular issues. It has strong associations with the discussion generating *fatwa* (legal interpretation) within the NU organisation.
46 Assistant director, A. Nurul Fuad, Executive Secretary, Sudarpo Said, Financial manager, Farid, St Khadijah. Department of research, Feri Cokroaminoto, Department of library and developing the capacity of the unit, Rondi Zein and Chotibul Umam, Department of empowering and community advocacy, Phinky Hidayati, Department of information, documentation and publication: Alfisah Thoha.

Chapter 4

1 The earlier version of this chapter has been published in an edited book entitled *Indonesian Islam in New Era: How Women Negotiate Their Muslim Identity*, edited by Susan Blackburn et al, published by Monash University Press, 2008.
2 Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup K.H.A. Wahid Hasyim dan Karangan Tersiar*, Panitia Buku Peringatan Alm. K.H.A Wahid Hasyim, Jakarta, 1957.
3 See Ailsa Zainuddin, "Education in the Netherlands East Indies and The Republic of Indonesia", in R.J.W. Selleck (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton Victoria, 1970.
4 See Joost Cote, 1992, *Letters from Kartini: An Indonesian Feminist 1900-1904*, Monash Asia Institute, Clayton Victori, 1992.

5 Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiyai*, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1982, p. 54.
6 See M.D. Zuhdy, "Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim: Inovator Muslimah", *Tebuireng*, no. 1, May, 1986, pp. 44-45.
7 The couple had seven children, namely Hamnah, Abd. Jabar, Abidah, Ali, Jamilah, Mahmud, and Karimah. All of them died in infancy, except Abidah and Jamilah.
8 See Haidlor Ali Ahmad, "Kesetaraan Gender dan Pemberdayaan Perempuan di Pondok Pesantren", *Penamas (Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Kemasyarakatan)*, No. 36. 2000.
9 From her marriage to Kiai Muhaimin, Nyai Khoiriyah had three children, but all of them passed away in Mecca.
10 Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā'* in the seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest: N.S.W., 2004.
11 See Abdurrahman Mas'ud, *Intelektual Pesantren: Perhelatan Agama dan Tradisi*, LKIS, Yogyakarta, 2004.
12 Martin Van Bruinessen, "Mencari Ilmu dan Pahala di tanah Suci: Orang Nusantar Naik Haji", *Ulumul Qur'an*, Vl II, No. 5, 1990, p. 42.
13 Interview with Bapak Muchsin Zuhdy, on September 25, 2003, in Jombang.
14 Interview with Bapak Muchsin Zuhdy, on September 25, 2003, in Jombang.
15 Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup* ... pp. 69.
16 *Ibid.*, pp. 105.
17 ... *Beberapa kiyai mengajar sendiri anak-anak perempuan mereka kitab-kitab tingkat atas dan tinggi. Nyai Khairiyah putrid K.H. Hasyim Asy'ary umpamanya, sangat dalam pengetahuannya dalam cabang-cabang pengetahuan Islam*... The translation is mine. See Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren*... p. 54.
18 Interview with Nyai Abidah, on September 18, 2003, in Jombang.
19 Interview with Kiai Yusuf Hasyim, on September 25, 2003, in Jombang.
20 Interview with Ibu Machtumah, on October 11, 2003, in Jombang.
21 Interview on September 23, 2003, in Jombang.
22 Interview on October 14, 2003, in Jombang.
23 Afaf Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot, *Women and Men in Late Eighteenth-century Egypt*, University of Texas Press, USA, 1995, p. 11.
24 Abdurrahman Wahid, the grandson of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ary, the first son of Kiai Wahid Hasyim.
25 Interview with Sinta Nuriyah, on February 12, 2003, in Jakarta.
26 Azyumardi Azra, "Biografi Sosial-Intelektual Ulama Perempuan: Pemberdayaan Historiografi", in Jajat Burhannuddin (ed.), *Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama dan PPIM, Jakarta, 2002, p. xxxvi.
27 Together with Nyai Khoiriyah, there were two other *nyais*, namely Nyai Fatimah and Nyai Machmudah Mawardi, appointed as members of *Badan Syuriah* PBNU at the same time.
28 The difference between PB Muslimat NU and PBNU is that the former is part of PBNU. To be appointed to PBNU means to deal with more than just Muslimat NU, because PBNU is an umbrella for the Muslimat NU (women NU's wing organisation), Fatayat NU (young women's NU wing organisation), IPNU (youth NU organisation), and other sections of NU. See Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup* ... pp. 105.
29 Interview with Ibu Nurlaili Rahmah, on September 19, 2003, in Jombang.
30 Interview with her former student on October 14, 2003, in Jombang.
31 In this regard, I can trace back one article written by Nyai Khoiriyah, entitled "*Pokok-Pokok Tjeramah Pengertian antar Mazahib Dan Toleransinya*" published *by Gema Islam (Majalah Pengetahuan dan Kebudayaan)*, August 1962. In his article on "*Nyai*

Khoiriyah: Inovator. Muslimah", Muhsin Zuhdy said that *Majalah Semesta* in several numbers: no. 5 in 1980, no. 6 in 1981 and no. 1 in 1982 cover the figure of Nyai Khoiriyah, in which her interpretation of the Quranic verses on polygamy was also published. See Muhsin Zuhdy, "Nyai Khoiriyah: Inovator Muslimah", *Tebuireng*, no.1, May, 1986, p. 45.

32 See Madelon Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis, Ibuism and Priyayization: Path to Power?, in Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof (eds), *Indonesian Women in Focus: Past and Present Notions,* Dordrecht-Holland: Foris Publication, 1987.

33 Interview with Nyai Abidah, on September 27, 2003, in Jombang.

34 Interview with Nyai Abidah, on September 18, 2003, in Jombang.

35 Interview with Nyai Abidah, on September 18, 2003, in Jombang.

36 Nyai Abidah was married to the family of *Pesantren* Pacul Gowang, Kiai Machfud was the son of Kiai Anwar. From this marriage, they had eleven children, Maksum (born in 1938), Hamna (born in 1942), Kyisah (born in 1945), Jarir (born in 1947), Lily Zakiyah (born in 1950), Abdul Halim (born in 1953), Anas Fauziah (born in 1956), Abdul Hakim (born in 1958), Sofia (born in 1962), Abd. Wahid (born in 1965) and Mariam Muhsinna (born in 1968).

37 Interview with Nyai Abidah, on September 27, 2003, in Jombang.

38 Interview with Nyai Abidah, September 27, 2003, in Jombang.

39 Interview with one of Nyai Abidah's former pupil on October 13, 2003.

40 Interview with Lily Zakiyah Munir, on July 15, 2003, in Jakarta.

41 Interview with Lily Zakiyah Munir, on July 15, 2003, in Jakarta.

42 Interview with Lily Zakiyah Munir, on July 15, 2003, in Jakarta.

43 This column is dedicated to those who seek religious legal interpretation (*fatwa*) or an answer from *ulama* regarding particular religious issues or matters.

44 I obtained this data from the documentation of the local village office.

45 To whom, according to Islamic law, they are not allowed to be married; such as father, brother, father-in-law, uncle.

46 Interview with Nyai Mahshunah, on October 8, 2003, in Jombang.

47 PPP was one of three political organisations that were sanctioned by the New Order Government. The others were Golkar (Golongan Karya) and PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia). PPP was known as the Islamic party. *Santri* Muslim tended to choose this party, particularly under the New Order regime, when there was no PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa).

48 An organisation concerned with developing the quality of education.

49 Interview with Nyai Mahshunah on October 8, 2003, in Jombang.

50 From her marriage to Umar Faruq, the couple only have three daughters and no sons. One of her daughters graduated from the State Institute for Islamic Studies. She sometimes replaces Nyai Mahshunah's position in the *pesantren*, for instance, her role of leading the communal prayers of the students. Once, I was with the students for the communal prayer during the Ramadan time. Nyai Mahshunah who was supposed to lead the communal prayer was not there with us, but her daughter was present instead. She was requested by the forum to take up the position, which was supposed to be her mother's one, which she finally accomplished confidently and successfully.

51 Interview with Nyai Mahshuna, 20 October 2003.

52 See Anita Rahman, "Moslem Women's Organisations: Their Role in Attaining the Benefits of Development", in Mayling Oey Gardiner and Carla Bianpoen (eds), *Indonesian Women: The Journey Continues,* ANU, Canberra, 2000; Susan Blackburn, "Indonesian Islamic Women Enter the Political Arena", in *Kultur*, volume 2, number 2, 2002; Sukanti Suryochondro, "The development of Women's Movement in Indonesia", in Mayling Oey Gardiner and Carla Bianpoen (eds), *Indonesian Women: The Journey Continues*, ANU, Canberra, 2000.

53 Fatayat NU is the NU women's wing organisation for young women under 40 years old, whereas Muslimat NU is for those over 40 years old.
54 See Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Potensi Prubahan Gender di Lingkungan Umat Islam: Sebuah Pengalaman", in Syafiq Hasyim (ed.), *Menakar Harga Perempuan*, Mizan, Bandung, 1999, pp. 242-248.
55 As-Saddeka Arebi as quoted by Camilia Fawzi El-Solh and Judy Mabro, "Introduction: Islam and Muslim Women", in El-Solh, Camilia Fawzi and Judy Mabro (eds), *Muslim Women's Choices: Religious Belief Social Reality*, Providence RI: Berg, 1994, p. 16-7.
56 Interview with Nyai Abidah, on September 18, 2003, in Jombang.
57 Interview with Nyai Mahshunah, on September 20, 2003, in Jombang.
58 See Iik Arifin Mansurnoor, *Islam in an Indonesian world: ulama of Madura*, Gadjah Mada University Press, Yogyakarta, 1990.
59 Dawam Rahardjo, *Pergulatan Dunia Pesantren: Membangun dari Bawah*, P3M, Jakarta, 1985, p. 15.
60 Interview with Nyai Abidah, on September 27, 2003.
61 Interview with Lily Zakiyah Munir, on July 15, 2003.
62 Interview with Lily Zakiyah Munir, on July 15, 2003.
63 Interview with Nyai Mahshunah on September 20, 2003.
64 Interview with Nyai Mahshunah, on October 8, 2003.
65 Yvonne Y. Haddad, "Islam, Women and Revolution in Twentieth-Century Arab Thought", in Yvonne Yazbeck and Ellison Banks Findly (eds) *Women, Religion and Social Change*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1985, pp. 275-306.
66 Interview with Lily Zakiyah Munir, on July 15, 2003.
67 Amal Rassam, "Women and Domestic Power in Morocco", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, No. 12. 1980, p. 170.
68 Asma Afsaruddin, "Introduction" in Asma Afsaruddin (ed.) *Hermeneutics and Honor: Negotiating Female "Public" Space in Islamic/ate Societies*, Centre for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University, Harvard University Press, Cambridge etc, 1999, p. 6.
69 Afsaruddin, Asma. 1999, "Introduction"... p. 19
70 Mary Elaine Hegland, "The Power of Paradox in Muslim Women's Majales: North-West Pakistani Politics, Ethnicity, and Gender" in Saliba *et al.* (eds), *Gender, Politics and Islam*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2002, p. 96.
71 The common definition of *aurat* understood by the vast majority of Muslims is to cover all of the body except the hands and the face. To some extent, some *ulama*s say it also includes the feet.
72 Interview with Nyai Mahshunah, on September 20, 2003, in Jombang.

Chapter 5

1 *Santriwati* is a particular term used for female pupils of *pesantren*.
2 The earlier version of this chapter has been published in *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* in 2007 in its special edition on Muslim's education.
3 From research conducted by P3M on 500 *pesantrens* in Indonesia, almost all of the *pesantrens* researched basically stated that in terms of the output, a *pesantren* was established to produce a devoted Muslim or *kiai/ulama*. This is an indication of how *pesantren* education is in fact projected to produce future *ulama* or religious leaders. See Mas'udi Pesantren Masa Datang dan Tiga Tipe Kyainya, in Dawam Rahardjo, *Islam Indonesia Menatap Masa Depan*, P3M, Jakarta, 1989, p. 200.
4 *Kompas*, September 9, 2002.
5 See Fatima Mernissi, *The Harem Within*, Bantam Books, Toronto and Sydney, 1995.

6 See M. Halstead, Radical Feminism, Islam and the Single Sex- School Debate, Gender and Education, vol. 3, no. 1, 1988, pp. 263-78.
7 Kaye Haw, *Educating Muslim Girls: Shifting Discourse*, Open University Press, Bunkingham – Philadelphia, 1998, p. 59.
8 Ayumardi Azra, "Dalam Sejarah Pendidikan Islam: Tidak Ada Segregasi Laki-Laki dan Perempuan", *Swara Rahima*, No. 7, III, Maret, 2003, p. 10.
9 *mahram* is the group of people for whom it is unlawful for a woman to marry due to marital or blood relationships.
10 Husein Muhammad (2002).
11 Personal communication, 30 January 2003.
12 Yvonne Y. Haddad, "Islam, Women and Revolution in Twentieth-Century Arab Thought", in Yvonne Yazbeck and Ellison Banks Findly (eds.) *Women, Religion and Social Change*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1985, p. 282.
13 Lila Dubee, *Women and kinship: comparative perspectives on gender in South and South-East Asia*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 1997.
14 See Sylva Frisk, *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*, NIAS Press, Denmark, 2009, p. 7.
15 Kathryn Robinson and Sharon Bessel (eds), "Introduction", *Women in Indonesia: Gender, Equity and Development*, Institute of South East Asia Studies, Singapore, 2002.
16 Kathryn Robinson, "Indonesian Women from Orde Baru to Reformasi", in Louise Edwards and Mina Roces (eds.), *Women in Asia: Tradition, Modernity and Globalisation*, Allen & Unwin, Australia, 2000, p. 141.
17 Achmad Muthaliin, *Bias Gender dalam Pendidikan*, first edition, Muhammadiyah University Press, Surakarta, 2001.
18 Judith Okely, "Privileges, Schooled and Finished: Boarding Education for Girls", in Shirley Ardener (ed.),*Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, London: Croom Helm, 1981, p. 109.
19 Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*.
20 *Ibid*. Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism*.
21 Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*, p. 112. Sahal Mahfudz, "Islam dan Hak Reproduksi Perempuan". Husein Muhammad, "Pesantren and The Issue".
22 Husein Muhammad, "Pesantren and The Issue", p. 72.
23 Sahal Mahfudz, "Islam dan Hak Reproduksi Perempuan".
24 The authoritative rights of her father or other male guardians in this regard.
25 *[D]i balik beberapa pandangan yang cukup empowering(memberdayakan) kaum perempuan, bukan berarti dalam fiqh tidak ada persoalan tentang perempuan. Misalnya dalam kasus menentukan pasangan hidup, perempuan masih terhadang dengan konsep ijbar (paksa). Dalam mengakses informasi, perempuan masih terstigma dengan anggapan masyarakat bahwa perempuan tidak usah mendapat informasi dari dunia luar sebab perannya adalah dalam rumah)*. The translation is mine. Sahal Mahfudz, "Islam dan Hak Reproduksi Perempuan", p. 118.
26 During my fieldwork, it was clear that the *pesantren* with no male pupils did not use this type of the *kitab kuning*.
27 Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Potensi Perubahan Gender di Lingkungan Umat Islam: Sebuah Pengalaman", in Syafiq Hasyim (ed.), *Menakar Harga Perempuan*, Mizan, Bandung, 1999, p. 244.
28 Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Perempuan di antara".
29 *Ibid*.
30 Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Perempuan di antara Lembaran Kitab Kuning", in Lies Marcoes and Johan Hendrik Meuleman (eds),*Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual*, Jakarta: INIS, 1993 pp. 155-163.
31 Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*, p. 175.

32 Although the name of Jamaluddin, the son of Syaikh Arsyad al-Banjary of South Kalimantan, appears on the cover of this *kitab kuning*, according to Martin (1999: 177), the local tradition has it that the real author was Jamaluddin's niece, Fatimah.
33 Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*.
34 Abdurrahman Wahid, "Islam dan Hak Asasi Manusia", in Lily Zakiyah Munir, *Memposisikan Kodrat*, Mizan, Bandung, 1999, p. 39.
35 See Daniel, S. Lev, *op.cit.*
36 Husein Muhammad, "Kajian Atas Kitab", p. 96.
37 C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the latter*, pp. 268-269.
38 Martin Van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiah di Indonesia: Survei Historis, Geografis dan Sosiologis*, Mizan, Bandung, 1992.
39 Mustofa Bisri, "Ini *'Uqûd al-Lujjayn* Baru: Ini Baru *'Uqûd al-Lujjayn*", in Sinta Nuriyah A.Wahid et al, *Wajah Baru Relasi Suami Istri: Telaah Kitab 'Uqûd al-Lujjayn*, LKIS, Yogyakarta, 2001, p. xi.
40 ... *[D]alam memahami (baca: mengarifi) suatu karya (ilmiah atau bukan, kitab kuning ataupun buku putih) selain kita mesti melihat metode yang dipakai dalam menggarap karya, latarbelakang pemikiran penulisnya, kita tidak boleh melupakan setting pada saat karya itu digarap. Seperti diketahuai, Imam Nawawi menulis Uqûd al-Lujjayn sekitar tahun 1294 H, ketika beliau berusia kuranglebih 64 tahun, sudah lebih dari seabad yang lalu. Tanpa melihat , dimana beliau hidup saat itu, hanya melihat waktunya saja, rasanya kita bisa memaklumi-bahkan mungkin tidak bias membayangkan lain dari-apa yang Imam Nawawi tulis itu. Apalagi bila kita ingat beliau menulis Uqûd al-Lujjayn menggunakan mtode penukilan dari ulama sebelumnya.Bayangkan, bila di abad kita sekarang ini saja, persoalan gender masih menjadi masalah hak kaum perempuan masih belum dihargai sebagaimana mestinya, apa pula keadaanya seabad yang lalu?* The translation is mine.
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43 Mahfudz, Sahal, "Islam dan Hak Reproduksi Perempuan: Perspektif Fiqih", in Syafiq Hasyim (ed.), *Menakar Harga Perempuan*, Mizan, Bandung, 1999, pp. 113-122.
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45 Anik Farida, 2004, "Wacana Gender di Pesantren", in *Penamas (Penelitian Agama Kemasyarakatan)*, Volume XVII No. 1, pp. 20-35.
46 Kitab *Akhlaqul Banat*, p. 17.
47 *Ibid.*
48 Kitab *Akhalaqul Banat*, p. 19.
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50 She is the wife of Abdurrahman Wahid, the fourth president of the Indonesian Republic. She graduated from a *pesantren* for girls, al-Fatimiyyah Bahrul Ulum Tambak Beras. Currently, she is the director of the NGO PUAN Amal Hayati, concerned with the issues of *pesantrens* and women's empowerment.
51 Interview on September 2, 2003.
52 Interview with Lily Zakiyah Munir, on July 15, 2003, in Jakarta.
53 The Ramadan schedule for the year 2003 of *Pesantren* Tebuireng and *Pesantren* Madrasatul Quran.
54 Sabine A.M. Kuyper, 1993, "Profil Organisasi Wanita Islam Indonesia" in Lies Marcoes and Johan Hendrik Meuleman (eds),*Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual*, Jakarta: INIS, and Farha Ciciek, 1999, "Idealnya Peran

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55 Personal communication, 14 November 2003.
56 Personal communication, 14 November 2003.
57 Personal communication, 23 October 2003.
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60 See Sabine A. M. Kuyper, 1993, "Profil Organisasi Wanita Islam Indonesia" in Lies Marcoes and Johan Hendrik Meuleman (eds),*Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual,* Jakarta: INIS.
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Index

Abdul Karim 70, 73
Abdul Kholik Hasyim 70
Abdul Wahid Hasyim 18, 70, 72-3, 79
Abdurrahman Wahid 33, 59, 72-3, 137-8, 140-1, 144-5, 148, 152, 156
Abidah 7, 29, 56, 58, 69, 72-81, 83, 85, 87, 95-113, 128, 133, 136, 150-4
Aceh 11, 22, 26-7, 32, 34, 40-1, 124, 144
Acehnese 22, 40
Achmad Baidlowi 70, 72
Ada'b al-Mua'sharah 125
agency 15, 17, 19, 25-9, 35, 52, 56, 68-69, 87, 108, 117, 135-6
Ahmad Khatib 41, 71, 150
Aisiyah 104
Aisyah 72-3, 147
Akhlaqul Banat 156
al-Amtsilât al-Taşrifiyyah 151
al-Azhar 38
al-Hanif 84
al-Haram mosque 89, 150
Alie Yafie 21
al-Zarnuji 44
ambiguity 30, 106, 128
American 85, 101, 135
amr ma'ruf nahy munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil acts) 54
anak pondok 40
anfa'uhum li al-nas (the most fruitful person for others) 130
anthropologists 19-20
Arabic 16, 32-3, 40, 42, 70, 84, 95-6, 121, 127, 137, 142, 151
– grammatical rules 151
– script 16, 32, 95-6, 137
Archipelago 16, 21-2, 37, 39, 41, 83, 119, 121, 123, 136, 140, 144, 146, 150
Aristocratic 24, 37, 87, 145
aristocratic families 37, 145
Asrama Putri Selatan 74
astrology 151
astronomy 151
aula (seminar-room) 99

bachelor degree 101, 109, 151
badal nyai 27
Badan Kontak Majelis Taklim Indonesia (BKMTI, the Board of Indonesian *Majelis Taklim* Association) 68
badan otonom 57
Badan Syuriah PBNU (Supreme Religious Council of Nahdlatul Ulama) 93
Badriyah Fayumi 59
Bahasa Jawa halus (refined Javanese language) 44
bahsul masa'il 59
Bandar Kedungmulyo 65, 148
Bandung 37, 137, 139, 143-4, 147-8, 154-6
Bani Hasyim 82
Banten 123
Bapak Pembangunan 48
Barakah 20, 22, 44, 53, 90, 139
bargaining positions 111

Bisri Syansury 18, 63, 69, 73-4, 89, 110, 143, 149
black area 70
blue-blood legitimacy 94
boarding school 16, 40-1, 119-20
Brawijaya 87
Breadwinners 31
budaya baca 83
Buddhist 16, 65
Bukittinggi 150
Buletin Amal Hayati 61
Bumi Manusia 15
Bustanul Ulum 40

Capitalist economic activities 70
Catholics 65
central government 71
Central Java 24, 71, 121, 127, 150
Cepdes (centre for pesantren and democracy studies) 61, 78-9, 83
Characteristic 17, 24, 42, 44, 55, 118, 124, 127, 144
Charisma 17-8, 20, 53, 69, 71, 92, 139, 149-150
charismatic religious figure 17
Chile 84
Chinese 37
Choliq 72-3
Christian Missionaries 31
Cirebon 61
civil society 28, 83-4, 100
collective leadership 29, 45-6, 80, 106, 109, 133, 145
communal prayers 18, 34, 45-6, 53, 80, 91, 101, 103, 132, 153
Compulsory Education Program 39
conservative perception 131
Constituent Assembly 98
counter-culture 70
Cukir 53, 66-7, 69-70, 75, 78
cultural broker 45
cultural impacts 70
curriculum/curricula 27, 31-2, 38-9, 42, 54, 117, 120-1, 127-8, 149

dalem 43
Darul Hakam 73
Dayah 11-2, 27, 40-1, 44, 53, 121, 142
Demak 71
democracy 61, 78-9, 83-5, 93, 104, 143
– period 61, 78, 93
Department of Education 11
Department of Religious Affairs 7, 11, 64-6, 118, 148
Dewan Pendidikan 11, 102
Dewi Sartika 37
Dharma Pertiwi 49
Dharma Wanita (the organisation of the wives of the civil servants) 49-50
Dichotomy 19, 21, 23, 125, 136
Diniyah Putri 38, 88, 143
divorce 19, 57
Diwek 13, 65-70, 74-5
domestic
– activities 125
– and public duties 98
– lives 23, 122, 131
– responsibilities 110
– sphere 20, 22, 54, 98, 108
– violence 26, 61
dormitory 11-2, 43, 77, 116
DPRD 11, 98, 102-4, 113
DPRG 58
Dutch 15, 31, 37-8, 42, 77, 87
– ethical policy 37, 87

East Aceh 40
East Java 7, 17, 29, 33, 35, 42, 57, 61, 63, 65, 71-3, 104, 136, 141, 150
East Indies 15, 37, 143, 151
educational segregation 55, 116-7
Egypt 19, 38, 40, 91, 119, 131, 152
eighteenth century 16, 41, 91, 144, 152
emancipation 38, 58, 95, 109
endogamous marriage 28, 34, 51, 88

English 9, 25-6, 42, 47, 83-4, 151
– courses 83
ethics 125
ethnic 21, 37, 46, 48, 154
ethnographers 20, 30

Faiqoh 52, 138, 146
Farha Ciciek 59, 156
fashion 119
Fatayat NU 11, 28, 31, 35, 51, 56, 59-60, 62, 72-3, 102, 104-6, 136, 152, 154
Fatimah 122, 152, 156
Fatwa 59, 91, 151, 153
Female Religious Teacher Training College 12, 18, 38, 77, 95
feminism/feminist 20, 52, 107, 138-9, 141, 151, 154
fieldwork 7, 26, 29, 33-5, 42, 45, 53, 59, 63, 65, 68-9, 83-4, 97, 115, 117, 120, 125, 127-8, 131, 137, 139, 155
figurative parent 43, 142
fiqh 61, 84, 91, 121-3, 147, 155
Fiqhunnisa 31, 60-1, 136, 148
formal education 23, 29, 76, 78, 97, 100, 129-30

gambling 70
Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara (GBHN, The Guidelines for the National Policy) 48
Gedang 71
gender
– discourse 124, 127
– issues 25, 56, 59-62, 83, 122, 124, 130, 138
– justice and equality 83
– relation 22, 29, 49, 54, 61, 108, 121, 123-6, 135-6, 139-40, 147, 156
general election 50, 57-58, 63, 97
Germany 101
Golkar (Golongan Karya) 11, 153
Gresik 88, 151
Gudo 65, 148
Gunseikabu (Japanese Military Government) 71
Gus 44-5
Gusdur 59

Hadits 83, 127
hadratus syaikh 71
Hafiz 73
hak-hak reproduksi perempuan (women's reproduction right) 61
halaqah 11, 38, 88-9
Halimah 71
haram (religiously prohibited) 150
harem 115, 154
Hasan Bashri 58
Hasyim Asy'ary 18, 35, 65, 69-76, 78, 82, 87-90, 94-5, 108, 110, 138, 149-50, 152
hijriyya 116
Hindu 16, 65
Holland 109, 139, 141, 145, 151, 153, 157
House of Representatives 11, 52, 58-9, 98, 102-3
household 19, 25, 31, 39, 44, 49, 106-11, 124-32
housewives 23, 31, 46, 49-50
Husein Muhammad 54, 59, 61, 117, 140, 142-3, 147, 155-6

ibadah 68
Ibu Aina 7, 42
Ibuism 25, 28, 35, 47, 49, 51-3, 55, 94, 134, 136, 141-2, 145-6, 153, 157
Idul Fitri 67, 96
Ijbar 122, 155
Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Nahdlatul Ulama (IPPNU, the NU Students Network) 101
ilm al-falaq 96
Ilmu laduni 44
imam (leader) 150
Imam al-Nawawi 123, 127, 156

Independence 23, 39, 47, 57, 77, 93, 149
Indian 16, 25, 141, 144
Indonesian
– Communist Party (PKI) 58
– history 144
– president 90, 138
– Representative Office 50
inheritance 19, 28, 57, 138
inheritance – matters 19
Inpres (*Instruksi Presiden*, President Instruction) 39
Institut Agama Islam Negeri (The State Institute for Islamic Studies) 92
Iranian 20, 141
Islam
– classical textbooks 18, 91
– economic concept 129
– Emansipatoris 83, 151
– Islamic classical literature 124
– knowledge 68, 96
– learning 16, 33, 51, 68, 89-90, 94, 99, 102, 127, 137
– learning heritage 16
– organisations 38, 60
– perspectives 84
– Primary School 75
– scholarship 89
– schools 32, 40, 57, 66-7, 75, 94, 99-100
– sciences 25, 33-4, 52, 69, 71, 74, 87-8, 90-1, 94, 96, 100, 104, 149
– tradition 16, 54, 99
– Transformative 83-4
– world 109

Jakarta 27, 33, 52, 61, 64-5, 83, 85, 115, 137-8, 140-57
Jamilah 72-3, 75-82, 101, 129, 130, 133, 152
Jamu 42
Japanese 47, 71, 77, 85
jarik (a traditional Javanese cloth) 99
Javanese court 43
Javanese Values 22, 136
jilbab 99, 112
Jogoroto 65
Jombang 7-8, 13, 15, 18, 29, 33-5, 38, 44-6, 52, 56, 58, 61, 63-77, 84-5, 87, 91, 95-8, 100, 102-4, 113, 124, 128, 133, 136-7, 141, 143, 148-54

Kalimantan 156
kanca wingking (a partner at the back) 126
Kantor Urusan Agama (the Office for Religious Affairs) 19
Kartini 38, 95, 140, 146, 151
kaum ibu 48, 161
kebaya 99
Kediri 29, 34, 56, 65, 76, 117, 148-9
Keras 71, 118
kerudung rubu 112
Khofifah Indar Parawansa 7, 59
Ki Hajar Dewantara 37-8
Kiai Adlan Ali 69
Kiai Ahmad Baidlowi 73
Kiai Aziz Mansur 45
Kiai Bisri Syansury 18, 63, 69, 73-4, 89, 110, 143, 149
Kiai Cholil Bangkalan 71, 123, 149-50
Kiai Haji Ahmad Dahlan 38
Kiai Idris 34, 73
Kiai Idris Marzuki 34
Kiai Machfudz Anwar 72, 74-8, 81, 83, 96-8, 110, 151
Kiai Maksum Ali 72, 74-8, 88, 95, 151, 153
Kiai Manaf Abd Karim 149
Kiai Muhaimin 88-90, 152
Kiai Nasir Abd. Fattah 29, 45-6, 75
Kiai Nur Aziz Ma'sum 72
Kiai Sahal Machfud 121
Kiai Saleh Darat 150

Kiai Shoichah 71
Kiai Wahab Chasbullah 18, 42, 46, 63, 149
Kiai Wahid Hasyim 18, 60, 70, 73, 78, 95-7, 110, 149, 151-2
Kiai Yusuf Hasyim 8, 46, 55, 70, 91, 152
Kiai Yusuf Mashar 69, 72-3
kiais' families 18, 107
kitab Jawahir al-Kalamiyah 97
kodrat 50, 58, 139, 156
Konstituante 56, 97, 103-4
kota pelajar 101
kota santri 11, 34-5, 63, 65, 67
kraton 23
Kudu 65
Kwaron 67, 75, 99, 150

Lamongan 65
langgar 145
lasykar hizbullah (the civilians who were trained to fight against the colonial military) 77
law faculty 37
leadership structure 16, 42-3, 46, 51, 56, 80, 82, 85
legacy 31, 135, 138, 166
liberation 37
Lily Zakiyah Munir 7, 33, 61, 78-9, 83-5, 97-8, 109-10, 128, 139, 151, 153-6
live-in 40, 144
local
– autonomy 83
– sensitivity 111, 129
– society perspectives 111
Lombok 53, 55, 141, 147

Madrasah Aliyahs (Islamic senior high schools) 67
Madrasah Banat 89-90, 111
Madrasah Darul Ulum 89
Madrasah Ibtidaiyahs (Islamic Elementary Schools) 66
Madrasah Salafiyah 74, 82
Madrasah Tsanawiyahs (Islamic junior high schools) 67
Madura 40, 65, 71, 108, 149-50, 154
mahram 12, 100, 113, 117, 125, 155
main duties 18, 128
majales 111, 154
Majelis Syuriah 57, 104
Majelis taklim 44, 46-7, 51-2, 68, 94, 97, 99, 102, 104-6, 123, 150
Majelis Tanfidziyah 57
majelis tarbiyah wa ta'lim (the board of education and instruction) 46, 55
Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Indonesian Ulama Council) 92
Malang 29, 34, 65, 73, 77
Malay peninsula 41, 121
Malay script 96, 100
Malaysia 46, 119, 123, 140-1, 145-8, 155
Manaqib 53-4, 68-9
Mandarin 42
maqasid al-shari'a (the aims of the *sharia*) 84
Maria Ulfah Ansor 59
marital issues 83, 122
marriage 24, 27-8, 34, 51, 71-2, 87-8, 95-6, 107, 110, 118, 140, 149, 152-3
Masdar F. Mas'udi 59, 122, 142-3, 147, 154-6
Masjid 12, 42, 99
Maskunambang 88, 151
maslahat 84
Mathematics 151
mbah nyai 29, 134
mbok bakul 22
Mecca 16, 33, 41, 44, 53, 71, 74, 76-7, 88-90, 93-4, 104, 111, 123, 144, 149-52
Megaluh 65
Megawati 50
Middle East 16, 19-21, 25, 32, 41, 115, 122, 127, 137-41, 154
middle-upper class 16, 43, 108

Mimbar Ulama 92
Minangkabau 27, 38, 40, 71, 144
Ministry of National Education 39, 149
Ministry of Religious Affairs 18, 39, 63, 117-8, 137, 149
minority groups 73
Misogyny 27
mita breuh 22
mita peung 22
modernist 18, 41, 137-8, 143, 150
Mojoagung 65
Mojokerto 65
Mojowarno 65
Mondok 40, 71
moral impact 21, 116
moral values 116, 118-9
mosque 12, 17-8, 43, 65-6, 75-6, 81, 89, 99, 116, 149-50
motherhood 47-8
motherly duties 119
movement 18, 21, 37-8, 47-8, 56, 101, 104, 138, 143, 148, 150, 153
MPRS (House of Assembly) 58
Muallimat Sekolah Guru Putri (Female Teacher Education College) 77
Muballighah 12, 52, 92
Muhammad Hatta 48
Muhammad Yusuf 73
Muhammadiyah 11, 18, 28, 32, 38, 41, 142, 155
Multicultural Women 115
musholla 18, 65, 75
Muslim
– community 16-7, 32, 35, 88, 92, 116, 144
– countries 32, 123
– group 18, 32
Muslimat NU 12, 35, 56-60, 72-3, 75, 93, 97, 104-5, 136, 147, 152, 154
mustasyariah 58
Mustofa Bisri 123, 143, 156
Nahdlatul Ulama 11-2, 15, 18, 26, 31, 41, 55-7, 62-4, 77, 93, 98, 101, 112, 138, 147-8
Nahdlatul Wathan 53, 55, 141, 147
National Education Day 39
Nationalist 18, 37, 47-8, 56, 104
naughty children 129
Nawawi al-Bantany 121, 123
negative impact 130-1
negotiate/negotiating 8, 17, 19-20, 35, 47, 50, 55, 94, 106, 108-9, 131, 136, 139, 141, 151, 154
New Order 18, 22, 39, 49-50, 56, 102, 119, 138, 146, 153
Ngoro 65, 77
Ngusikan 65
nineteenth century 24, 37, 123, 140, 150
ninggrat 22, 25, 142
non-local culture 70
North Sumatra 39, 140
Nur Laili Rahmah 80, 82, 152
nyai 15-6, 18, 25, 27-30, 33-5, 43-4, 46-7, 50-6, 59-60, 105-8, 111-13, 115, 117, 124, 127, 129, 132-6, 139, 141-2, 145-6, 148
Nyai Djamilah 46
Nyai Abidah 7, 29, 56, 58, 69, 72-85, 87, 95-113, 128, 133, 136, 150-4
Nyai Adlan Aly 7, 53
Nyai Ahmad Dahlan 88
Nyai Dasima 15
Nyai Farida 7, 45, 54
Nyai Hasbiyah Hamid 7, 29
Nyai Khoiriyah 7-8, 15, 33, 53, 55, 69-78, 82, 87-97, 100-1, 103-4, 106, 108, 111-3, 133, 136, 151-3
Nyai Mahshunah 7, 29, 78, 82, 87, 100-7, 109, 112-3, 153-4
Nyai Munjidah 46, 75
Nyai Musyarrofah 45, 74-5
Nyai Nafiqah 71, 87
Nyai Nihayah 7
Nyai Noer Cholida 148

Nyai Nurkhadijah 38
Nyai Ruqaiyah 72-3
nyai sepuh 45, 97, 106
Nyai Solichah Wahid Hasyim 58, 73, 95
Nyai Ummu Salma 7, 29, 75, 157
Nyai Yusuf Mashar 69, 72-3

open-minded 108-9
opportunity/opportunities 8, 23, 31, 34, 37, 39, 52-3, 58, 67-8, 87-9, 95, 97, 101-2, 108-11, 116, 128-9, 133
Orde Lama (Old Order) 18-9, 76
P3M 12, 31, 56-7, 59-61, 83, 122, 136, 141, 144-5, 148, 151, 154
Pacitan 150
Pacul Gowang 34, 45, 66, 68, 153
Padang 32, 143, 163
pahlawan nasional (national hero) 73
Pakistan 32, 111, 154, 162
Palembang 89
Pare 67, 70
Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, National Awakening Party) 12, 63
Partai Persatuan Pembanguan (PPP, United Development Party) 102
patriarchal 20, 26-7, 30-1, 33, 54-5, 84, 107, 111, 122, 125, 135-6
"– bargain" 20
– *values* *33, 54, 107, 135*
patriarchs 31
Pattani 144
pedagogical aspects 117
pelajaran umum 18, 40
pemberdayaan (empowerment) 61
Pendidikan Guru Agama (Religious Teacher Training College) 12, 18, 77, 95
Pendidikan Guru Agama NU Putri (NU Female Religious Teacher Training College) 18, 77, 95
Pendidikan Guru Agama Putri Nahdlatul Ulama (NU Female Religious Teacher Training College) 77
pengadilan agama (religious court) 57, 98
pengasuh 80, 82, 92
Perak 65, 148
Perempuan 12, 47, 61, 90, 92, 115, 139-40, 142-4, 146-8, 152-7
Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII, Islamic Students Movement of Indonesia) 101
Perguruan Putri Muallimat (female college of Muallimat) 75
Perukunan Jamaluddin 122
pesantren
– al-Fatimiyah 45
– al-Islahiyyah 29
– as a 'little kingdom' 43
– Cukir 53, 66-7, 69
– Darul Ulum 34, 73, 87, 89, 100
– Denanyar 32, 38, 64, 69, 73-4, 76, 80, 95, 149
– Lirboyo 34, 42, 45, 39
– Manba'ul Ulum 42
– Madrasatul Quran 69, 73, 139, 156
– Maskunambang 88
– Nahdlatul Wathan 53, 55, 141, 147
– Paculgowang 34, 45, 66, 68, 153
– Purwoasri 148
– *putri* 12, 38, 42, 46, 71, 74, 82, 108
– Putri al-Fatimiyyah 46, 74
– Putri al-Lathifiyah 42
– Putri Salafiyah Syafiiyah Seblak 29, 46, 75, 82
– Risalah 7, 42
– Salaf 117
– Salafiyah Seblak 29, 34, 55, 66, 74-5, 78-82, 91, 96, 128, 151
– Singosari Malang 73, 77
– Siwalan Panji Sidoarjo 71, 89

– Tambak Beras 7, 29, 42, 45-6, 64, 71, 74-5, 149, 156
– Tebuireng 8, 18, 35, 46, 55, 63-73, 76, 88, 92, 95-8, 143, 149, 151-3, 156
– *untuk Pemberdayaan Perempuan* (Pesantren for women empowerment) 61
– Walisongo Cukir 69, 75
Peshawar 111
Peterongan 65
PGA (Pendidikan Guru Agama) 12, 95-6
physical segregation 55, 115, 120, 135
pilgrim 41, 71, 89, 149
PKB 12, 63, 103, 153
PKK (*Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*, Family Welfare Movement) 49
Plandaan 65
Ploso 65
pluralism 73, 140, 142, 146
policy 37, 48, 87, 98
political
– activities 18, 50, 56, 97, 102-3
– campaign 109
– party 11, 19, 57, 63, 102-4, 106
polygamy 153
pondok 12, 17, 40-3, 46, 70, 81, 118, 131, 144-5, 147, 149-50, 152
pornographic 130-1
Post-Independence 39
powerless 20
PPP 12, 102-3, 153
Pramoedya Ananta Toer 15
Presidency 18, 23, 48, 50, 119
primary school 31, 34, 39, 75
private
– education 87
– politics 19, 30, 138, 142
– realms 106
– spheres 30, 52, 108, 134-5
priyayi 12, 22-34, 41
Priyayization 24-5, 28, 51, 53, 106, 141-2, 145-6, 153, 157
pro-gender perspectives 125
prostitution 76
protestants 65
PUAN Amal Hayati 31, 33, 60-1, 92, 136, 156
public
– activities 31, 49, 103, 107, 123-4, 133
– and private 17, 19, 21, 23, 30-2, 47, 52, 47, 106-8, 115, 128, 131, 134-8, 141
– appointments 60
– domain 31, 112, 115, 131-2
– education 32, 87, 104, 106, 110, 115
– engagement 105
– facilities 116
– life 44, 49, 108
– participation 52, 111
– positions 52, 60, 97, 106-7, 111, 136
– positions and appointments 60
– religious roles 90, 104
– roles 13, 21, 35, 52, 87, 93, 94-5, 100, 103-6, 110-11
– schooling 88
– space 21, 22, 90, 98, 100, 106-7, 109, 111-3, 116, 122, 136, 139, 141, 154
– spheres 21, 30, 49, 107-9, 112, 136
Purwoasri Kediri 29, 117, 148
pusat ngelmu 44

Qawwamuna 110
Quraish Shihab 21, 139
Qur'an 45, 91, 130, 141, 152
Qur'anic exegesis 121, 123, 131
Qur'anic studies 45
Qurratul 'Uyûn 122, 125

radicalism 84, 99

Rahima 31, 59-61, 136, 155
Rahmah al-Yunusiyyah 38
Ramadan 12, 44, 67-8, 71, 96, 117, 124, 128, 138, 149, 153, 156
rangkang 41
Rasuna Said 38-9, 144
Raudhatul Athfals (Islamic kindergartens) 66
religious
– credibility 89
– *femininity* 115
– figures 20, 91, 95, 110-1, 115
– judge 52, 60, 98-100, 104, 106, 122-3
– knowledge 46, 87
renegotiate 20
reproductive health 60, 84
responsibilities 24, 31, 57, 110, 116, 123, 126
romo 43, 133, 142
rural Java 18

Said Aqiel Siradj 58, 147
Santri 11-12, 15, 16-8, 25, 27-8, 34-5, 40-4, 47, 51-2, 63, 65, 67, 71, 76, 87-9, 102, 115, 124, 134, 136, 145-7, 150, 153-4
santri ibuism 25, 28, 35, 47, 52, 146, 153
santri kelana 71
santriwati 12, 27, 102, 115, 128, 134, 154
Saudi Arabia 122
Sayid Muchsin Musana 89
second marriage 88
Sekolah Hakim Agama Negeri 98
Sekolah Muallimat 18, 32
selendang 112
Semarang 38, 150
Shi'a 111-2
significant figures 93
single-sex 116
Sinta Nuriyah A.Wahid 33, 143, 156
Sjahrir 49, 140, 146
social charity 56
socio-economic status 16
sociological factors 122
socio-political 21, 56, 84, 109, 122
Soekarno 104
Soka University Tokyo 148
Sokhnas Magot Diop 20
spatial segregation 17
state ibuism 47, 49
State Institute for Islamic Studies Sunan Kalijaga 101
stereotype 98
structural leadership 30, 79-80, 93
Suara Ibu Peduli (The Voice of Caring Mothers) 50
sub-culture 16, 22
sufi 53
Suharto 18, 48-50, 102, 119, 138
sultan 43, 55
Sumatra Tawalib 38
sumber ngelmu 89
Sumobito 65
sunnah (prophet tradition) 59
Surabaya 18, 57, 92, 102
Surau 12, 27, 39, 40-1, 53, 144-5
Swara Rahima 61, 155
Syaikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabau 71
Syaikh Arsyad al-Banjary 89
Syaikh Mahfudz al-Tirmasi 71
Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantany 121
Syarikat Islam 74, 150
Syeikh Yasin al-Fadany 89
syukuran (celebration) 117
Syuriah 57-8, 93, 104, 152

Ta'lim Muta'allim 44
tabir (curtain) 58
tafsir (Quranic exegesis) 121
Taman Siswa 37
Tanara 123
tarekat 16, 53, 137, 144, 156
Tasikmalaya 37
tausiyah 53, 117, 132

Tebuireng 8, 18, 35, 46, 55, 63-73, 76, 88, 91-2, 95-6, 98, 143, 149, 151-3, 156
Tembelang 65
terrorism 26, 84, 99
theology 97, 121
tolerance 94
traditional Islam 11-2, 26, 40, 44, 53, 147
traditional norms 111
Tremas 150
Tuan Guru 53, 55
Tuan Guru Zainuddin 55
twentieth century 16, 32, 37, 47, 88-9, 93, 135, 137-8, 144, 150, 154-5

ulama Jawi 71, 121, 123
ulama perempuan 90, 92, 144, 152
Umar Faruq 79-80, 82, 153
University of Indonesia 115
Uqûd al-Lujjayn 31, 122-3, 125, 127-8, 142-3, 150, 156
Ustazah 12, 27, 52, 132

values of respectability 111-2
veiling 112
vice-president 48
victims of subordination 102

Wahab Chasbullah 18, 42, 46, 63, 149
Wahid Hasyim 18, 58, 60, 70, 72-3, 78, 95-7, 110, 137, 149, 151-2
wajib [obligatory] 97
wanita 47, 49-50, 90, 140, 142-3, 147, 150, 155-7
WCC (Women Crisis Centre) 29
West Sumatra 12, 22, 38, 41, 143-4, 150
Western schools 32
Western-Dutch education 87
Western-style education 23
wife 12, 15, 18, 25, 38, 44-5, 48-9, 54, 71, 74-8, 82, 89, 95-6, 107, 110-111, 116, 119, 123-6, 133, 136, 142, 146, 149, 151, 156
womanhood 17, 22-4, 47, 49, 53
women's issue 8, 25, 31, 56-61, 106, 109, 122
women's live 16, 19, 21-3, 27, 30, 127, 135-6
wong cilik 22-3, 145
Wonosalam 65

Yayasan Kesajahteraan Fatayat 60

Yogyakarta 37, 101, 137-9, 142-4, 148-50, 152, 154, 156

Zainuddin Labay el-Yunusiyy 38

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